

Proud of academy

COUNCILLOR Paul Hodgins' views were reported in some detail in the *Richmond & Twickenham Times* of April 15.

As a school, we respect the right of any individual to share their opinions. Councillor Hodgins' views are clearly heartfelt and we support any opinion whose objective is to actively enhance the experience of the students in our school. That is what we are all here for.

That having been said, as a senior leadership team, we feel that the article was open to misinterpretation. The misconceptions in the article needed to be addressed both for our current students, parents and staff and for those who will come after them.

Firstly, Richmond Park Academy is not a failing school. It has been an academy for nearly six years during which time commitment from the local community has gone from strength to strength. From a position in 2010, then in local authority control, where RPA had small year groups it will enter its third consecutive academic year in September with a full cohort. It is a genuinely local community school.

Secondly, we have a high proportion of "outstanding" teachers. Eight subjects in 2015 achieved over 80 per cent GCSE pass marks including geography, history, Spanish and the triple sciences with the majority of subjects achieving results well above the national average including English. In a recent school survey 85 per cent of respondents assessed teachers as welcoming, friendly and helpful with many parents sharing their first hand positive experience of the teachers' commitment.

Many of these teachers are responsible for our extensive extra-curricular provision which delivers close to 70 sessions a week from basketball and photography club through to philosophy and gardening club.

We have been open about our disappointment last year with our maths results and how those results affected both the students who didn't reach their target and our overall figures. We have also addressed it. Our current Y11's have been able to take advantage of Easter Holiday revision classes, Saturday School and one to one tuition. We are targeting a 10 per cent improvement in results this year and have every expectation that target will be achieved.

Our students, parents and teachers should be proud of the school that they support as we are proud



This photograph was sent in by snapper @willjohnsnow. Do you have a picture you wish to share with our readers? Send it to lettersrtt@newsquest.co.uk.

Londoners have their say

of them. RPA will never sit on its laurels. We still have much to achieve. But the groundwork is there and significant progress is being made on a daily basis as we strive to deliver an outstanding learning experience for all of our students. We are also looking forward to the arrival of our new principal Paul Mundy-Castle in September. There is much to be optimistic about.

Richmond Park Academy operates an open door policy. If anybody has any doubt about our conviction or our commitment to continuing to see our school thrive and prosper we would encourage them to come and see for themselves.

RICHMOND PARK ACADEMY, SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM
Tracey O'Brien, Acting Principal
Susan Edwards, Vice Principal

Julie Johnson, Vice Principal
James Cook, Assistant Vice Principal
Jack Costello, Assistant Vice Principal

In gutter

IF Mr Goldsmith loses his bid to become Mayor of London next Thursday he has made no secret of his intention to continue as MP for Richmond Park and North Kingston. The question is, should his constituents still want him?

Throughout the mayoral campaign he has repeatedly boasted of his achievement in massively increasing his majority in the constituency. I congratulate him on it. However it is important to consider what the underlying factors behind that achievement were.

Few would deny that part of Mr Goldsmith's attraction to the voter was that he portrayed himself as being a positive campaigner. However that reputation now lies in tatters following what is widely agreed to have been a thoroughly divisive and unpleasant campaign waged by Mr Goldsmith against his nearest rival Sadiq Khan. Mr Goldsmith can no longer claim the moral high ground; he has shown himself willing to roll around in the gutter in order to gain power and that has irreparably tarnished his 'nice guy' persona.

Another key element of Mr Goldsmith's success in 2015 was that clearly the majority of local residents wanted him to be their local MP. They took him at his word before the election when he assured them in this paper that "I love the work I do representing my home area, and I'm hoping residents will back me for another term." Evidently his assertion simply wasn't true as barely a month had passed after Mr Goldsmith secured that second term when he announced his decision to join the mayoral race. Had he been honest about his ambitions he

may well have still won the election but I doubt with such a substantial majority.

So to return to my central question, should local residents want to be represented by an MP who clearly views the job of representing Richmond Park and North Kingston as second best? He clearly wants the mayoralty but if he doesn't get that that he'll settle for being an MP. Richmond deserves better than being the consolation prize for a man who clearly has ambition beyond parliament and, as has been seen, will stoop to sordid depths to satisfy his lust for power.

CLLR GARETH ROBERTS (HAMPTON WARD)
Leader - Richmond Liberal Democrats

Distortion

YOU report the Advertising Standards Authority's admonition of the Back Heathrow lobby group, for making misleading claims.

Apart from the ASA's criticisms, the polling on which Back Heathrow based its claims looks to be distorted by being carried out, your report indicates, in 11 constituencies of which the vast majority were to the north and west of Heathrow (including up to Ruislip and Beaconsfield). Aircraft noise of course affects communities considerably more to the east and south.

In your report, Back Heathrow also repeats its

oft-made claim that most responses to the Airports Commission's public consultation supported a third runway. But this consultation was not a 'poll' of support or opposition, it was a call by the Commission for comment on the evidence base it had gathered.

I made a submission on what I saw as shortcomings in the Commission's noise assessment report (for example, its omission of the trend towards larger, and therefore noisier, aircraft), but did not signal my own opposition to expansion.

As has been flagged in your paper before, were responses to the consultation orchestrated by, or even use a pro-forma template supplied by, Back Heathrow (how else could it claim to know the numbers)?

It has every right to state its case, but much of what Back Heathrow produces or says seems to me to be a calculated distortions.

MIKE CRAWFORD
 by email

Listen up

I'M concerned about Jeremy Hunt's heavy-handed treatment of junior doctors.

They have always served our community well. My granddaughter was born in Kingston Hospital and we will always be grateful to them for making the mother and child safe and looked after. My family and I have always trusted them because

they never failed us. I believe they are not failing us now – if they say that the new contracts are unsafe, they should be listened to.

DUSKA ROSENBERG
Pagoda Avenue
Kew

A mystery

THERE is a mystery worthy of Agatha Christie regarding the topsy-turvy turmoil troubling the Lib Dems.

Their London mayoral candidate ended up as sole nominee on an internal ballot and remains number one on their London-wide Assembly Member list.

Meanwhile, their second incumbent AM slipped to number five and – some months later – slipped away completely, saying he had "very little chance of winning".

This was former Lib Dem group leader Cllr Knight, whose partner crossed Richmond Council's floor to become the one and only Labour councillor. This defection occurred only a few days before the announcement that Cllr Knight fell to fifth place – piped to second place by the wife of Kingston and Surbiton's ousted MP.

Considering last year's disastrous drubbing at the polls, it appears that the Lib Dems are rebranding under their titular London mayoral candidate in an attempt to avoid Lib Dems losing here.

JILL GARROW
Harrowdene Gardens