

## Letters to the Editor



### Memos to Gove re RE and music

Sir, We applaud the aspiration of Mr Gove for greater academic rigour in the educational experience of our young people and his intention that this is reflected in the examining of core subjects.

Mr Gove has expressed his admiration of faith schools. Their students not only gain impressive value-added results in public examinations, they are formed by the values and beliefs of their schools which help them to become compassionate human beings.

Religious Education is at the heart of the curriculum in faith schools but, under current proposals, it has no place among core English Baccalaureate (EBacc) subjects. Examinations should reflect the priorities of the curriculum but the current EBacc proposals make this impossible for such schools. We would hope that the Government's response to its consultation, which ends today, will be to recognise this contradiction. Faith schools form an important proportion of our education provision; one third of all schools are either Church of England or Catholic.

A solution to this problem could be to add Religious Studies to History and Geography as EBacc Humanities subjects either for faith schools only or ideally for all schools. Then, with a more demanding content, if required, it could be included as one of the core subjects which compose the more rigorous English Baccalaureate. This is surely in keeping with Mr Gove's aims.

JOE PEAKE

Headmaster, St George's Weybridge

THE REV GABRIEL EVERITT, OSB

Headmaster, Ampleforth College

PAUL STUBBINGS

Headmaster, Cardinal Vaughan

Memorial School

MAUREEN MARTIN

Headteacher, Coloma Convent Girls' School

opportunity for enterprise, innovation or investment.

Perhaps we should aim to de-franchise those operations (mainly inter-city) where effective competition can protect the public interest, with FirstGroup, Virgin and possibly others together offering West Coast services on an open access, competitive basis.

Ongoing performance-related subsidies/premiums could replace the current fixed-contract arrangements.

DAVID COOPER-SMITH

Bletchley, Bucks

### Doctors and caring

Sir, In her article on compassion on the wards (Opinion, Dec 7), Camilla Cavendish does not mention doctors.

The "six Cs" she refers to — care, compassion, competence, commitment, communication and courage — apply equally to doctors, both GPs and hospital doctors. A doctor who displays these attributes will be more effective in treating patients.

Such a doctor will have a better relationship with patients, which will result in better treatment and care. Unfortunately, not all doctors display these attributes.

In the debate on what is required from the medical profession in the 21st century, let's not forget what we want from doctors.

STEPHEN HYETT

Teddington, Middx

### Vaughan Williams

Sir, We are the closest living relatives of Ralph Vaughan Williams who gifted Leith Hill Place with its farm, cottages, walled garden and rhododendron and azalea walks, to the National Trust in 1944-45 ("Composer's Surrey home must be saved from sale threat", Nov 17). Our great-grandmother, Lucy, was the younger sister of Margaret, Ralph Vaughan Williams's mother, and both were daughters of Josiah Wedgwood III and Caroline. Lucy is famous for her worm experiments for her Uncle Charles Darwin (Caroline's brother) which took place in the fields below the house.

According to your report, one of the options being considered by the National Trust is to sell Leith Hill Place on a long lease as a private house. We believe that this is contrary