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Rt Hon Alan Johnson MP

The Most Reverend Vincent Nichols
Archbishop of Birmingham
Catholic Education Service for England & Wales
39 Eccleston Square
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2 October 2006

Dear Archbishop,

Thank you for your letter of 2 October, setting out the Church's intention to revise its section 48/50 inspection frameworks in respect of the faith character of Catholic schools in order that these inspections take full account of the contribution Catholic schools and sixth form colleges make to social cohesion.

I warmly welcome this decision. I am sure that it will show what excellent work Catholic schools and sixth form colleges do in this important area. Catholic schools are ethnically and socially diverse, and are strongly committed to community cohesion. I know that the work they do in promoting your values to their children is matched by their wider social and community role and their work with other schools, including other faith schools and schools that are not affiliated to a faith group.

I am glad that you propose to discuss your plans with the other faith communities. I am sure they will share your commitment, and I look forward to specific proposals in respect of section 48/50 inspections.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Alan Johnson'.

ALAN JOHNSON

