



Richmond Inclusive Schools Campaign
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Mr. David King
Archdeacon Cambridge's CE Primary School
The Green
Twickenham
Middlesex, TW2 5TU
Copy of letter to Ms Janet Foster

17 September 2013

Dear Mr King,

The enclosed report from Richmond Inclusive Schools Campaign (RISC) - *Faith-based discrimination in Richmond primary school offers 2013* - is intended to provide governing bodies with a new, evidence-based perspective on the impact of their admissions policies. It includes constructive suggestions for simple changes church schools can make to become, in the words of Vince Cable (a defender of faith schools) "more community minded", without challenging their status or ethos. We hope the governing body at Archdeacon Cambridge's will consider the impact that the school's policy is having on the wider local community and give serious consideration to the suggested changes.

In preparing the report, we were encouraged by clear indications from the Diocese of London that its schools "*should be there to serve the community, so we're really encouraging schools to move towards [open admissions]*" and by the fully inclusive admissions policy adopted by St. Mary's primary in Hampton. This is especially important at primary level, when parents rightly expect to be able to find a good school, close to home, and especially when there is so much pressure on places overall.

In the case of Archdeacon Cambridge's, according to data provided by the school, after accommodating siblings, over 70% of places this year were offered on the basis of faith. At the same time, there were other children in Twickenham and north Teddington who were not offered any of their 6 preferred schools, and were instead assigned places at schools up to 5km away.

We are calling for all Church of England primaries that currently apply a faith-based admissions test to move to a model similar to Archdeacon Cambridge's - where a faith-based test is applied to the places remaining after siblings have been accommodated - but with a lower % than the highly exclusive 70% figure the school currently applies. We are calling for a maximum of 50%, but ideally lower. There seems no obstacle to such a change being adopted by the Admissions Code deadline of 15 April 2014 in time for September 2015 entry.

This suggestion does not fully address our in-principle concern that *no* local children should be denied access to state-funded schools because of their parents' beliefs or religious practices. But we believe it is a readily achievable way in which your governing body could make the school's admissions policy more community-minded without impacting the school's status or ethos.

We look forward to hearing your views, and would be happy to discuss the matter further.

Yours sincerely,

Jeremy Rodell – for Richmond Inclusive Schools Campaign