

What you need to do

Give your views via the Council's on-line consultation at <http://tinyurl.com/rcschool-lbrut>

It closes on **16th March 2012 - why not do it now?!**

The Council's contact for this consultation is Matthew Paul, email M.Paul@richmond.gov.uk, postal address: London Borough of Richmond upon Thames, York House, Twickenham TW1 3AA

What are the issues?

- Pupil numbers are rising
- Sites are rare and money is tight
- The Council has **only one site for a new secondary school** - Clifden Road, Twickenham
- They want to offer it to the church for a 150-place Voluntary Aided Catholic secondary school (*plus a 30-place Catholic primary*).
- The decision will affect many generations to come.
- The great majority of local children will be excluded from this new state school simply because of their parents' beliefs. That can't be right.



URGENT: Have your say before 16th March

COUNCIL CONSULTATION on giving the only local site currently available for a new secondary school to the Catholic Church...

THE SCHOOL RICHMOND COUNCIL PROPOSES

VOLUNTARY AIDED CATHOLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL*

For children of Catholics

Children of the non-religious, Anglicans, other Protestants, Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs & others need not apply

**plus small Primary with maximum 10 community places*

CLIFDEN ROAD

THE SCHOOL THE BOROUGH NEEDS

RICHMOND BOROUGH INCLUSIVE SECONDARY SCHOOL

A top-quality school welcoming all children whatever their parents' beliefs

CLIFDEN ROAD

Turn over to see what action you can take

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

I don't have school-aged children. Am I affected?

You're paying for the borough's state schools through your taxes. And hopefully you care about fairness in a decision that will affect the borough for many decades to come.

Aren't State-funded Catholic schools inclusive anyway?

No. Children from Catholic families get priority, regardless of where they live. Children of non-Catholics only get in if there are spare places. But no-one is claiming that there will be any spare places if there's a Catholic secondary school at Clifden Road. Non-Catholics need not apply*.

The Council says there will be plenty of secondary school places for everyone, so what's the problem?

Already there are not enough places at good quality state secondaries in the borough. That's why more Richmond parents feel forced to switch to private schools at secondary level than in any other London borough. It's notoriously difficult to predict demand for school places. And the Council is taking a huge risk by basing its plans on assumptions that hardly anyone else believes. The safest and fairest option is to plan for enough places at high quality schools that are open to all.

The Council's consultation document claims "*we will provide up to 700 additional community [secondary] places*". This is misleading, as the figures at the end of the document show. The Council plans zero increase in capacity across its existing maintained schools, and has no firm plans for an additional community school. Download "*RISC's Briefing on Richmond's Secondary School Plans*" from www.richmondinclusiveschools.org.uk for more details.

There's no viable alternative for the site.

Wrong! The Council bought the site for a new school. There is already a strongly-backed proposal for an inclusive secondary Free School that would like to use the site – see <http://sciengschool4richmond.btck.co.uk/> - and there are likely to be others if the Council asked for them.

**A token concession is that up to 10 places at the primary school may be open to the community, and these children would have priority at the secondary. That's a maximum of 10 children out of 150 at the secondary from 2020 - the year the first of these children would reach the age of 11. 100% of the secondary places would be effectively "Catholics only" until 2020, when it would drop to 93%. The church-controlled governing bodies would be able to change the admission rules in the meantime.*

Won't the church pay for a Catholic school?

The Council's consultation document claims that "*The local Catholic community would meet almost all the costs of providing the proposed...secondary school.*" This is misleading. The Council is using taxpayers' money to buy the site and buildings. It plans to lease them to the church for 125 years at a "peppercorn rent". The church will indeed pay a one-off cost to update the buildings. But once the school opens, and for decades to come, the taxpayer will pay all the running costs, and almost all the ongoing capital costs. But the church will control the governing body. It's a fantastic deal for the church. Catholic parents are taxpayers too of course. But being a taxpayer doesn't give anyone a right to an exclusive state-funded school just for members of their own religion.

Aren't children from Catholic primaries discriminated against in admissions to other borough secondaries?

All but one of the borough's Catholic primaries are outside the Council's "Linked School" scheme. So are some community primaries. Children from these schools get a lower priority in applications to Orleans Park, Teddington and Grey Court secondaries. But the Council's Admissions Forum has recently made a formal recommendation to drop the Linked Schools Policy as it's no longer working effectively. Children from Catholic primaries will then have the same chances as everyone else. And they'll still be eligible for existing Catholic secondaries across the borough borders. If there's a Catholic school at Clifden Road, they'll have exclusive access to that as well!

There are six Catholic primaries in the borough but no Catholic secondary. Isn't there a need for one?

There aren't enough sites and there isn't enough money. No one wants to discriminate against children of Catholics. But giving one group a new exclusive school means discriminating against everyone else, as well as segregating children by religion. The privilege of existing exclusive state-funded schools is not an argument for having more of them. And there are already nine Catholic secondaries within a 5 mile radius of the centre of the borough.

Don't Catholic schools have a good reputation?

Many Catholic schools are indeed good quality. But so are many community schools, including the borough's two "Ofsted outstanding" community secondaries. And many faith schools - like the new Anglican primary proposed for Hampton - are open to all. What's wrong with a good new school open to all children, regardless of who's running it?