

St.Mary's & St.Peter's governors refuse to be more inclusive

Letter to Richmond & Twickenham Times 20 Jan 14

Sir,

The deadline for applications to local primary schools for 2014 has just passed. As parents await their offers, we understand that the governing body of St.Mary's & St. Peter's Primary School in Teddington (SMSP) has decided to retain its highly discriminatory faith-based admissions policy for 2015. That is despite a Diocesan policy to encourage greater inclusivity (especially at schools, like SMSP, which have been recently expanded) and Vince Cable's call for local faith schools to be "more community minded" in their admissions.

The school is one of the few Anglican primaries in the borough with no upper limit to the number of places subject to faith-based priority. Richmond Inclusive Schools Campaign's 2013 report on primary schools showed that only 14 of the 90 places at SMSP were offered to children who were neither siblings of existing pupils or new faith-based applicants. The result was a cut-off distance for community places of only 303 metres.

Local parents who are not Christian churchgoers are therefore in the invidious position of sticking to their principles or pretending faith in order to get into their local state-funded school. The majority of the SMSP governing body seem happy to ignore its own Diocesan policy and keep it that way.

Jeremy Rodell
Richmond Inclusive Schools Campaign