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Mr. Colin Powell – Director  
Diocese of Southwark Board of Education  
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**APPROXIMATE REPRODUCTION OF LETTER (original accidentally deleted)**

Dear Bishop Cheetham and Colin Powell,

The enclosed report from Richmond Inclusive Schools Campaign (RISC) - *Faith-based discrimination in Richmond primary school offers 2013* - is intended to provide dioceses and school governing bodies with a new, evidence-based perspective on the impact of selective admissions policies in the borough of Richmond. It includes constructive suggestions for simple changes church schools can make to become, in the words of Vince Cable (local MP and a defender of faith schools) “more community minded”, without challenging their status or ethos. 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 preparing the report, we were encouraged by the clear indications given to the press by Liz Wolverton from the LDBS that Diocese schools “*should be there to serve the community, so we’re really encouraging schools to move towards [open admissions]*”<sup>1</sup> and the example provided by the new St.Mary’s primary in Hampton, with its fully inclusive admissions policy.

There are three Diocese primary schools in the borough: The Queen’s School (Kew), Holy Trinity (Richmond), St.Richard with St.Andrew’s (Ham).

### **The Queen’s School**

Queen’s is the most selective Anglican primary in the borough. After siblings, only 1 of its 60 places was offered on a non-faith basis. The impact of this degree of discrimination on Queen’s and other nearby primaries (see map on page 2 of the report) can be seen in this information from the School Census 2012:

- **% pupils eligible for Free School Meals** (standard measure of deprivation): Borough average 9%; Borough CofE school average 7%; Kew Riverside 16%; Darrell 21%; Holy Trinity 14%; Marshgate 8%; Queen’s 2.3%
- **% pupils of white British origin**: Borough average 50%; Borough CofE average 52%; Kew Riverside 45%; Darrell 48%; Holy Trinity 50%; Marshgate 51%; Queen’s 60%.

While some parents may welcome access to such a highly selective state-funded school, this degree of social and ethnic selection is not only out of line with the Diocesan position, but appears to be in conflict with fundamental Christian ethics.

We urge you to encourage the governing body at Queen’s to change their admissions policy in line with the suggestion below.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/educationnews/10205477/No-places-for-churchgoers-in-newly-opened-faith-schools.html>

## **Holy Trinity and St.Richard with St.Andrews**

At Holy Trinity, 29% of the offers after siblings were made on a faith basis, but there are 30 Foundation places (out of 60). The result is that, in a year where there is a large number of siblings, non-churchgoers would be squeezed out. The suggestion below overcomes that issue.

St.Richard's was not over-subscribed this year, but, like Queen's it is relatively unusual in having no upper limit to the degree of faith-based selection that applies if it is over-subscribed. Given the rising demand for places, this may well become significant.

We therefore believe it would be beneficial if both schools adopted the suggestion below, and would urge you to encourage their governing bodies to do so.

## **Suggested change**

We are calling for all local Church of England primaries that currently apply a faith-based admissions test to move to a model which would put a clear % cap – maximum 50%, but ideally below - on faith-based admissions for the remaining places after siblings have been accommodated. This type of model, albeit with an excessive %, is already in place at Archbishop Cambridge's Primary in Twickenham. There seems therefore no obstacle to its adoption 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 schools could make their admissions policies more community-minded without impacting the school's status or ethos.

We have written accordingly to the chairs of governors of all the schools.

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