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Copy to Ms Elizabeth Stubbs

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Dear Mrs Pearce,

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 St.Stephen's will consider the impact of the school's policy on the wider local community.

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.

There were no faith-based offers this year in the case of St.Stephen's. But we were concerned to see the introduction of a small number of Foundation places for future years, making the school potentially less inclusive than it was as a junior school fed by Orleans Infants.

There were children in Twickenham and north Teddington this year who were not offered any of their 6 preferred schools, and were instead assigned places at schools up to 5km away. It is likely that the situation will become even more competitive in future years, making the unfairness associated with faith-based selection more acute.

Our report therefore calls on St.Stephen's not to go any further in the direction of exclusivity. This does not, of course, 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.

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