



GOOD NEWS ON SECONDARY SCHOOL ADMISSIONS - BUT FOR HOW LONG?

Commenting on the new about secondary school offers recently made by Richmond Council, Richmond Inclusive Schools Campaign (RISC) said:

“It’s good news that more children were offered places at one of their preferred schools in this year’s secondary school offer round than in previous years. But hidden behind this ‘good news story’ are concerns about future years that remain unchanged.

It was clear there would be enough places in 2013, when there will be a dip in the numbers leaving borough primary schools. But RISC remains concerned about the year-on-year increases in 2014, 2015 and 2016. By 2016, nearly 400 more children will be leaving borough primaries than in 2013.

What is more surprising this year is that, after all the demands for an exclusive Catholic secondary school, the new St.Richard Reynolds Catholic High School seems to have been under-subscribed. We understand that some of the 97 borough children who did not receive offers from any of their preferred schools have been offered places there, even though their parents are not Catholics. While some of these parents are not unhappy that this is their only option, we have been contacted by others who are exceedingly concerned.

It seems that parents of the 250 children due to leave local Catholic primaries this year are being cautious about the new school. That may be because it has not yet opened, or because last year’s court case created some uncertainty. Another new factor is that the borough’s “linked schools system” has now been dropped, with the result that children from Catholic primaries are no longer disadvantaged if they choose to apply for community secondaries.

The fact that some non-Catholic parents are being offered places at the Catholic school, even though they did not apply for it, suggests that most of the community schools, at least on the Twickenham side of the borough, are already over-subscribed. That is a concern given that 150 more children will leave borough primary schools in 2014 than in 2013.

Those who were so insistent that the Catholic school at Clifden Road must have up to 100% priority for children of Catholics - despite appeals from Vince Cable and others for a 50% limit - presumably remain confident that the school will soon be fully subscribed. Children of local non-Catholics, even if they cannot find a place elsewhere and would be happy to attend the Catholic school, will then no longer be welcome. Even children of Catholics from outside the borough will have priority. Perhaps now is the time for the school to re-think that policy of exclusivity, before it starts to bite.”

Notes for editors:

1. Council press release
http://www.richmond.gov.uk/home/council_government_and_democracy/council/civic-offices/departments/communications/press_office/press_releases/february_2013/offer_da_y_secondary_school_places_announced.htm
2. Council paper including both borough resident applications showing the drop for 2013 entry, and tables giving the number of applicants for each school for 2013/14 compared to its capacity ("PAN"): <http://www.richmondinclusiveschools.org.uk/assets/documents/council-o-s-paper-on-secondary>
3. Data from School Census Jan 2012 (published June 2012 at <http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s001071/index.shtml>) showing increase in numbers working their way through borough primary schools:
4. Numbers of pupils at borough state-funded primary schools (including church schools) at Jan 2012 showing year of entry to secondary education:

| Age reported in Jan 2012 School census | Age 10 | Age 9 | Age 8 | Age 7 | Age 6 |
|--|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Year entering secondary school | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 |
| Number of children | 1732 | 1703 | 1857 | 1907 | 2092 |

For details see <http://www.richmondinclusiveschools.org.uk/assets/documents/number-age-of-children-at-rich>

5. Evidence of offers at St.Richard Reynolds to unplaced children:
http://www.facebook.com/RichmondInclusiveSchools/posts/173076722840110?notif_t=like
<http://www.mumsnet.com/Talk/secondary/1696770-sir-richard-reynolds-twickenham>
[twickenham tweets @twickerati](#) After all the campaigning for new VA RC school, reports of kids offered places there who didn't even have it on their list. Undersubscribed?
6. Changes in borough school capacity in 2013 (places per year Year 7/age 11):
 - Addition of 30 new places at Christ's School (referred to in Council press release)
 - Reduction of 30 places at Hampton Academy (to enable 6th form to be accommodated)
 - Reduction of 40 temporary places at Grey Court
 - New Catholic school of 150 places (intended to provide for children who would otherwise travel to Catholic schools outside the borough, so little net impact on borough availability once the school is fully subscribed by children of Catholics).