

"Our schools are not faith schools for the faithful, they are Church schools for the community": Church of England responds to Government education proposals.

Writing ahead of Education Sunday - being marked on 11th September this year - the Church of England's Chief education Officer has responded to the Government's education proposals in a blog published on the Church's website.

The Rev. Nigel Genders said the Church was "glad that the Prime Minister recognises the need to ensure that the whole system serves everyone and removes disadvantage."

Mr. Genders continued "The government proposals may lead to a lifting of the cap on faith-based places, but we remain committed to ensuring our schools serve their local community. Our schools are not faith schools for the faithful, they are Church schools for the community, and we don't propose to change that. Very few select exclusively by Christian affiliation and many of our schools have large numbers of children of other faiths or no faith. Those that give priority to Christian children, do so in areas where competition for places is acute and providing places purely on distance from the school would mean that only the wealthiest, who can afford to move house nearby, can access the best schools."

Mr. Genders also commented on the Church's plans to open new secondary schools recognising that whilst the Church of England is the largest faith based provider of primary schools in the country it operates much fewer secondary schools: "Competition for places occurs where our schools are oversubscribed due to their popularity. We are confidently planning to open new Church of England schools, particularly new secondary schools so that more of the 800,000 pupils who choose a Church of England primary school education can have access to a secondary education that shares our vision for education which promotes life in all its fullness. And we want to provide more primary schools too, because there is a constant demand for more school places of the quality that our schools rightly have a reputation for as they promote education for wisdom, hope, community and dignity."

The full blog can be read here: www.cofecomms.tumblr.com/post/150170407937/church-schools-for-the-whole-community.

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