



**GREAT KINGSHILL
CHURCH OF ENGLAND
COMBINED SCHOOL**

**Cryers Hill Road Great Kingshill
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Tel: 01494 713159 Fax: 01494 718239
Headteacher: Mr R A Dodds**

Our ref: 10270302

by e-mail: hard copy in post

20 March 2002

Mr D Ayres
Education Department
Bucks County Council
Civic Centre
Aylesbury
Bucks HP20 1UZ

Dear Mr Ayres

Further to my letter of 19 March, your letter of 14 March raising an objection on behalf of Buckinghamshire LEA to our proposal to change category from Controlled to Aided status was discussed at our Governing Body meeting. Our Governors were surprised, disappointed and saddened at the content.

I am happy to respond to all your points. I would like to introduce my response by reference to the position of the DfES which is that the present Government "Welcomes all categories of Schools". In proposing to become Aided we are simply following that legitimate process through to what for us is a logical conclusion. Like existing Church of England Aided Schools, we will maintain our partnership with the LEA and the Diocese.

As to your points:

- There is nothing in the September 2000 Regulations on Change of Category about standards. However, as a Governing Body we are surprised that the LEA would not appreciate our continuing commitment to raising standards whatever our status.

- The ownership of assets and tenure:

This is a no-change legal position in that the site and premises of all Church Voluntary Schools (Controlled or Aided) are invested in the trustees (who can be local or Diocesan). The disposal of the assets of a closed Church school has always been a matter of reference to the Trust Deed. This has always been the legal position.

- Contractual position and conditions of service for staff:

The Governing Body will be the employer. This is already the case with existing Aided Schools and indeed Foundation Schools. Whilst the LEA has no legal grounds for imposing upon the duties and responsibilities of another potential employer, I can assure you that the good relations between this Governing Body and its staff will continue. Like any school, Great Kingshill as an Aided School will have the right to look for staff who will support its particular vision and ethos. Since our vision and ethos is an inclusive one, which reflects the traditions of the Oxford Diocese, we foresee no problems.

- Admissions

We have already assured you of our commitment to continuing with our inclusive admissions policy. We acknowledge that, in law, a future Governing Body may wish to change our admissions policy. It could not do so without due consultation, and this would include the right of another admissions authority to refer it to an adjudicator. However I would again stress that a change in admissions policy is not something this Governing Body is either planning or anticipating.

- Composition of the Governing Body

All the points you raise are equally valid for existing Aided Schools. We are puzzled as to why they should be an issue specifically for us.

However, again let me clarify the legal position. If we become Aided the Foundation Governors will be in a majority of 2. The Diocesan Board would appoint all foundation governors. So far three Diocesan schools have changed category to Aided. In each case the Diocesan Board has facilitated the existing Governing Body to become the new Governing Body by reassigning roles. This has been entirely non-contentious as you may be aware from the smooth change of category of Farnham Royal. It also reflects the trust the Diocese has in the local community.

Whilst we are happy as a Governing Body to respond fully to your points, we were surprised to receive your formal objection. We had been led to understand from the Diocesan Director of Education that he had answered all these points in principle (though not in relation to our school) at a liaison meeting with Peter Mooney, Marion Clayton and yourself. We understand that both Peter Mooney and Marion Clayton expressed satisfaction with Danny's responses and welcomed him speaking on the matter at the next School Organisation Committee (The SOC had already agreed to this)

Whilst we recognise your right in law to object, we feel the matter and issues could have been equally addressed without the formal objection, and in a spirit which reflects the trust and partnership between the Diocese and the LEA - which was referred to very positively at the above-mentioned meeting by Peter Mooney and Marion Clayton.

Yours sincerely

LIN SMIT (MRS)
Chairman of Governors

cc: Marion Clayton
Roger Dodds
Peter Mooney
Raj Popat
Danny Sullivan