

**Title: Nishkam Primary School**

**Author: Department for Education (DfE)**

## **Annex B**

### **Section 9 Impact Assessment**

There are 19 maintained primary schools within one mile of the proposed Nishkam Free School, and 47 in total within two. The vast majority of these schools are, like the Free School, single tier primaries (ie. not split into infant and junior) and of the 47, 17 have a faith designation (either Church of England or Roman Catholic). We do not believe that this proposal, for a primary school admitting children aged 4-11, would be likely to impact any secondary schools or post-16 institutions, including Academies. However, there are many local primary schools, which may be impacted by the establishment of the proposed school.

As the school is due to be located in a densely populated, urban area (also taking into account the fact that primary aged children generally do not travel as far as secondary aged children) we have considered 2 miles to be a sufficient radius in which to conduct the impact assessment.

### **Analysis**

#### **a. performance information - using Ofsted reports and school performance tables**

This is difficult in terms of KS2 given the level of boycott last year. However, the data we do have show generally average KS2 results within the immediate vicinity (under 1 mile away) of the proposed school, with poorer performance starting in schools approximately a mile away.

Analysis of Ofsted reports also shows a mixed picture. Within two miles of the school, there are 5 inadequate schools (2 in special measures), 18 satisfactory, 23 good and 1 outstanding. The school closest to the proposed Free School is St Michael's Church of England Junior and Infant school, which is currently in special measures. However, the next five nearest schools were all recently rated 'good' by Ofsted. The nearest 'outstanding' school is Heathfield Primary School, 0.7 miles away.

#### **b. popularity - using admissions arrangement and LA data which will give information on whether the school is oversubscribed, a first choice for parents or has surplus places**

Most of the schools are oversubscribed (in some cases, significantly), although it is unclear to what extent this is an example of popularity with parents given that there is growing pressure on primary places as a result of rising demographics in the area, and in Birmingham as a whole. It is certainly the case that parents in many areas of the city are struggling to get their first choices of school for their children.

It should be noted, however, that the faith schools appear to be less popular given that of the 30 secular schools, only 9 are undersubscribed, whereas of the 17 faith schools, 12 are currently undersubscribed (and 1 is currently at exact capacity). While this may point to an oversaturation of faith places (specifically, Christian) it is also likely to be related to the fact that a number of the faith schools also happen to be the worst performing in the area (both in terms of results and Ofsted judgements). In contrast, Nishkam offers Sikh places that are not currently catered for, and for which they have demonstrated clear demand.

The two faith schools nearest the proposed Free School are both undersubscribed (St Michael's by 10 places, St Francis Catholic Primary School by 32 places). The possible impact on St Michael's will be discussed below. Similar impact is possible at St Francis (0.5 miles away) although it is a larger school (twice the size of St Michael's) and also received 'good' in its most recent Ofsted report.

**c. demographic – using information from PfS or the LA on whether there is a surplus or deficit of places projects for the area**

Based on the analysis of pupil numbers data in the 2 mile radius that has been covered, there is currently a deficit of 674 primary places in the area. Partnerships for Schools have also indicated that since 2001 there has been a dramatic increase in the birth rate in Birmingham. This started to impact on primary schools in 2003. The lowest point in primary school population is in 2009, which means that it is now on the rise and the deficit in places is predicted to grow over the coming years.

**Conclusion**

Given the level of oversubscription in the local schools, the Free School is unlikely to have a significant impact overall, and in fact the 420 places it would eventually offer would do much to alleviate the growing demand for primary places in the area, reducing the pressure on the local schools to provide additional places in response to rising demographics. The local authority has already expressed support for the Nishkam Primary School, as they see it as part of a solution to the growing need for primary places in the area. It is therefore very unlikely that this proposal would have any impact on schools judged satisfactory or above, unless they already have significant surplus places. We assess the likely impact on those schools below.

St Michael's Church of England Junior and Infant School

This school is only 0.1 miles away from the proposed site and currently has 10 surplus places and is in special measures (recently judged by a monitoring visit to be making inadequate progress in addressing the issues raised by the initial report). Of all the schools in the area, in our view it is this school that is most likely to feel an impact should Nishkam Primary School open - a view shared by Partnerships for Schools.

Nishkam's oversubscription admissions criteria prioritise Sikh children first, followed by children of other faiths. As a school designated as Church of

England, St Michael's may experience loss of its faith pupils as a result of this policy. It should also be noted that St Michael's school population is extremely diverse, with 70% of children speaking English as an additional language. This would suggest that the designation may not necessarily be reflected in the pupils who attend the school. Thus if the proposed Free School is successful in attracting both Sikh and non-Sikh children, it is reasonable to assume that parents of pupils currently at St Michael's may apply for places at Nishkam Free School, both based on faith and non-faith criteria. St Michael's is also a relatively small school (1FE), so the loss of pupils will have much more of an impact, even if it is over a 5 year period as the Free School builds up to full capacity.

Therefore, we would conclude that the impact of Nishkam Free School on St Michael's is likely to be **significant**, and could lead to it closing if it does not improve its performance in the coming few years..

Leaving aside St Michael's, the remaining 4 inadequate schools are at least a mile away from Nishkam's proposed site:

- a. Lozells Junior and Infant School is 1 mile away. It is currently oversubscribed by 46 places, and is also a relatively large school (capacity for 420 pupils). Adding in the fact that the school does not have a faith character, and would therefore not suffer from the loss of faith pupils that may affect St Michael's, a significant impact on the school is unlikely.
- b. St George's CofE Junior and Infant School is 1.2 miles away. Like St Michael's, it is currently undersubscribed (by 12 places) and is a relatively small school (capacity for 210 pupils). Its KS2 results are also very poor (42% achieving the expected level in 2010). Given these factors, it is likely that the proposed Free School will have some impact on St George's, but not as significant an impact as the school will have on St Michael's.
- c. City Road Primary School is 1.4 miles away. It is oversubscribed by 96 places and does not have a faith character. In line with the arguments made above in respect of Lozells, a significant impact on the school is unlikely.
- d. St John's Ladywood Church of England Primary School is 1.7 miles away. Much like St George's, it is undersubscribed (by 36 pupils), and is a relatively small school (capacity for 210 pupils). Its KS2 results are similarly poor (43% achieving the expected level in 2010). However, as the school is further away from the proposed school and primary aged children are much less likely to travel longer distances, particularly in urban areas, it is likely that the proposed Free School will have some impact on St John's but this impact is not predicted to be significant.

It is also worth focusing on some of the schools that are currently undersubscribed in the local area. Given the current deficit in places, and the

predicted increase in the number of children needing primary school places in the coming months, we have considered that only those with over 30 surplus places are potentially vulnerable to feeling an impact should Nishkam open. They are:

- a. St Francis Catholic Primary School (32 surplus places), discussed above.
- b. St John's Ladywood Church of England Primary School (36 surplus places), discussed above.
- c. Foundry Primary School (43 surplus places). This school is 0.9 miles away from the proposed site and rated 'satisfactory' by Ofsted. Given its small size (capacity for 210 pupils) it may be vulnerable if it loses pupils to Nishkam but as a non faith school that is nearly a mile away the impact is lessened.
- d. Shireland Hall Primary School (57 surplus places). This school is 1.8 miles away from the proposed site and has also been rated 'good' by Ofsted, so the impact is predicted to be marginal.
- e. St Clare's Catholic Primary School (70 surplus places). This school is only 0.7 miles away from the proposed site and has been rated 'satisfactory' by Ofsted. As with any faith school, Nishkam's faith based oversubscription criteria could impact on its pupil intake. It is therefore possible that the Free School will have some impact on St Clare's, but it should not threaten the continued existence of this school.
- f. Grestone Primary School (112 surplus places). This school is 1.5 miles away from the proposed site, rated satisfactory, and below the floor target (57% KS2 in 2010). While the level of surplus is high, the school is also relatively far from the Free School (there are 37 schools between it and the proposed site) so it is unlikely that the new school will have a significant impact on Grestone Primary School, and certainly not sufficient to threaten the continued existence of this school.
- g. Cape Primary School (138 surplus places). This school is also 1.5 miles away from the proposed site, rated good but significantly below the floor target (42% KS2 in 2010). Again, while the level of surplus is high, the school itself is also very large (capacity for 700 pupils) and relatively far from the Free School. It is unlikely that the new school will have a significant impact on Cape Primary School, and certainly not sufficient to threaten the continued existence of this school.

The analysis above clearly shows that provision is mixed within the 2 mile radius that we have considered. While there is a general deficit of places overall, there remain some undersubscribed schools, all of which have some vulnerability to the introduction of a new school.

We have concluded that St Michael's is most at risk from the Free School given its proximity to the site, surplus places and poor performance. Given the quality of education that St Michael's is currently providing, threatening the school's viability is not in itself a negative outcome. Should the school fail to improve and in fact become unviable, it would have been replaced in effect by an improved education provision provided by Nishkam, which would improve the education chances of children in the area. The introduction of a competing Free School nearby would in fact increase parental choice in an area where it is difficult to place children in parents' first choice schools. The fact that it is the only Sikh faith maintained school in the area only strengthens the case for parental choice.

It has also been shown that underperformance and surplus places are certainly not unique to St Michael's. It is likely that the Free School will impact on several of the surrounding schools (most significantly those highlighted above) but that as a result, the impact on each particular school will be relatively small, and the overall impact on other schools in the locality will be **marginal**. The general deficit of places in the area is particularly pertinent to this judgement (and may well mean that should St Michael's improve, and/or the pressure on primary places worsen, the impact of the Free School will also be lessened). The introduction of a new school will lessen the pressure on other schools to provide additional places, thereby having a positive effect on local education provision in general.

Given that this is a primary school operating in a densely populated area with a number of other primary schools around it, we do not consider that it will have any impact on secondary schools, or indeed FE institutions, in the area. It will not be competing for any of the same children, and will not change the general location of the education being provided to children in the area, so they are likely to wish to attend the same secondary schools that they would otherwise had they attended any of the existing schools in the area.