

**Title: Hatfield Community Free School**  
**Author: Department for Education (DfE)**

**Impact Assessment – Section 9 Academies Act Duty**

1. Section 9 of the Academies Act 2010 places a duty upon the Secretary of State to take into account the likely impact of establishing the additional school on maintained schools, Academies, institutions within the further education sector and alternative provision in the area in which the additional school is (or is proposed to be) situated.

**Background**

2. Hatfield Community Free School is a 4 – 11, non-faith primary school. It plans to open with an intake of 2 reception classes admitting 60 pupils, with a subsequent intake of 60 places per year. It aims to be at capacity in 2018. Once it reaches full capacity the school will have 420 places. In addition, the school will make provision for 60 nursery places delivered through a private, voluntary or independent provider. The school will open on the former site of New Briars primary school in Hatfield, Hertfordshire.

3. The proposer group are a mixture of local parents and a leading educationalist; the lead proposer being a former head teacher and assistant director for standards and school effectiveness at Hertfordshire County Council (HCC). Hatfield is one of the more deprived and ethnically diverse parts of Hertfordshire and a significant proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language. There is a lack of primary school places in Hatfield and HCC is a driving force behind this project so as to secure sufficient places for the local area.

**Catchment Area, its Characteristics and Admissions**

4. The school's admissions policy is fully compliant with the School Admissions Code and will follow Hertfordshire County Council's (HCC) admissions criteria.

5. When the school is oversubscribed, the tie break criteria for infant class applications will be priority given to twins/multiple births. For admission into any other year group, priority will be given for students living nearest to the school (closest applicants take priority).

6. The school does not have a self-defined catchment area. For the purposes of the impact assessment, we have created a proxy catchment area. The average distance travelled to primary school in Hertfordshire is 0.8 miles. The furthest distance travelled to primary school by a significant majority (80%) of pupils in Hertfordshire is 1.5 miles. Of the 25 pupils who have so far selected the school as one of their choices, all but two live less than 1 mile from the site by straight line distance. Two pupils live in neighbouring towns up to 18 miles from the school. It is officials' view that it will be unlikely that schools situated over 1.5 miles away from the Free School will be impacted or will be more than minimally impacted.

7. In the Welwyn Hatfield district there is currently a 6.4% surplus of primary places however the primary school population is projected to grow significantly over the next five years. Any potential negative impact on local schools would be mitigated by the growing population (see table provided by the Local Authority below).

<b>April 2010 Forecast (Welwyn Hatfield primary places)</b>	<b>2010/11</b>	<b>2011/12</b>	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2014/15</b>	<b>2015/16</b>
<b>Demand</b>	8125	8430	8852	9143	9340	9481
<b>Surplus/Shortage</b>	884	579	157	-134	-331	-472
<b>% Surplus/Shortage</b>	9.8%	6.4%	1.7%	-1.4%	-3.7%	-5.2%

If no new primary school places were added there would be a 5.2% shortfall of places by 2015/16.

8. Hatfield, where the Free School will be, is an area where significant and unpredicted rises in demand have been experienced which have since been reflected in the forecast above. Hertfordshire County Council's most recent forecast for the town of Hatfield specifically indicates a shortfall of 79 places in 2012/13, 65 places in 2014/15 and 53 places short in 2017/18.

9. For all of the districts within Hertfordshire, including the neighbouring districts, the population is set to rise over the next five years. For example, the neighbouring districts of Hertsmere, Watford and St Albans are all projected to see an increase in school population of 7.5%, 20.4% and 10.9% respectively. The school population is expected to rise in Hatfield by 16.7%.

### **Local Authority View**

10. HCC was invited to provide views on the Free School proposal. They responded to that invitation on the 24 February saying that the Free School should not have an impact on existing schools due to the increasing demand for primary places in the area.

11. HCC's view is that opening the Free School is critical to meeting the demand for places, that the school is well placed to meet localised need and will provide an ideal solution to parental demand for places in Hatfield.

12. HCC have purchased the site for the school and agreed to pay £5.5 million in capital funding, being the total capital funding required to construct the Free School building.

### **Representations**

13. No direct representations have been received by the Department but a public consultation has been carried out by the proposer group. The group consulted with all school and nurseries in Hatfield and only received a response from one school, Oak View Primary School.

14. The governing body of that school expressed their concern over the effect of the Free School on the viability of the school's nursery provision however the school accepts that additional reception places will be required in the local area.

### **Impact on other schools**

15. We have considered the impact the Free School may have on all schools within a

1.5 mile radius of Hatfield Community Free School. The school will have a permanent new build site on New Briars Road in Hatfield however the school is likely to have a temporary site at a neighbouring secondary school, Onslow St Audrey's School for a short period over the autumn 2012 term. As there is a 0.7 mile distance between the two schools and the temporary accommodation will only be in use for part of a term, we consider that the use of the temporary accommodation for this period will not have any impact on any of the local schools in the short or longer term.

16. Below is a discussion of the likely impact on the nearest primary and infant schools to the proposed permanent site. The table below shows that opening the Free School will have a minimal impact on 5 schools and a moderate impact on three schools.

School name	Distance from Free School	Impact rating	Capacity	Pupils on roll	Ofsted rating	% of Y6 pupils attaining Level 4 in English and maths in 2011 <sup>1</sup>
<b>Birchwood Avenue Primary</b>	0.6	Moderate	210	183	Satisfactory	79%
<b>Oak View Primary and Nursery</b>	0.4	Minimal	262	270	Good	58%
<b>De Havilland Primary</b>	0.8	Minimal	420	403	Good	60%
<b>Countess Anne VA Primary</b>	0.6	Minimal	206	207	Good	78%
<b>St Philip Howard RC Primary</b>	0.3	Minimal	315	348	Good	98%
<b>Green Lanes Primary</b>	1.0	Minimal	363	319	Good	80%
<b>The Ryde</b>	1.1	Minimal	210	231	Outstanding	87%
<b>Howe Dell Primary</b>	0.9	Minimal	420	386	Good	84%

### **Schools where the impact is moderate**

#### ***Birchwood Avenue Primary School***

17. Birchwood Avenue Primary School is 0.6 miles from the proposed Free School. It has capacity for 210 pupils with 14% surplus places. The school shows above average attainment at Key Stage 2, with 79% of pupils achieving the expected level in English and maths in 2011 – above the national average of 74%. The percentage of pupils claiming free school meals (FSM) is 31%. The school was inspected by Ofsted in June 2010 and

<sup>1</sup> National average for 2011 was 74% and for Hertfordshire was 78%

received grade 3 – satisfactory. The school has made improvements following a further section 8 inspection in December 2011.

18. The school is located less than a mile from the proposed Free School and as the school is rated satisfactory by Ofsted – the lowest rated primary school in Hatfield - parents may be attracted to an alternative. The school has made improvements since June 2010 and above average Key Stage 2 results in 2011 may convince some parents to choose this school. The school may continue to have surplus places in the first two years of Free School's operation however the overall increase in demand for places in the local area should mitigate against any risk to the school's long term financial viability. The impact of the opening of the Free School has therefore been assessed as moderate.

### **Schools where the impact is minimal**

19. Of the seven other schools considered, all have been assessed as being minimally affected by the opening of the Free School. Four of the 7 schools are oversubscribed, thus highlighting the basic need for primary school places in the Hatfield area. The three schools with surplus places are unlikely to lose a significant number of pupils to the Free School as such a significant number of places are needed in the area. Two of the 7 schools (St Phillip Howard RC Primary and Countess Anne VA Primary) are also faith schools so are unlikely to lose pupils to the non-faith Free School. Both schools have above national average attainment at Key Stage 2 in English and Maths in 2011 (with attainment ranging from 78% to 98%).

20. Three of the non-faith schools are located from 0.9 to 1.0 miles from the proposed Free School. These schools are unlikely to lose pupils to the proposed Free School due to good results and the distance a pupil would be required to travel.

### **Impact on Secondary Schools, Special Schools, Alternative Provision Schools and FE institutions**

21. The Hatfield Community Free School will be a school admitting children of primary age. It will begin with an intake of 2 reception classes and will build up over subsequent years admitting two new Reception classes (60 pupils) each year. It will have no specialist SEN provision but will work to accommodate the needs of pupils where the school is named in their statement of SEN. As such, it is unlikely to have any direct impact on local secondary schools, Special Schools, alternative provision and even less likely to impact post-16 and FE institutions.

22. The introduction of a new primary school may, however, have an indirect impact on local secondary schools in terms of the types of primary feeder schools in the area for local secondary schools. HCC have already considered the increasing demand in the area for secondary places which the rising population in the area will create. This school will not be a feeder school, and our assessment is that they will be only minimally impacted, and all these schools are located in the same area so all the children who attend this Free School would still be able to go to the secondary schools they might otherwise have gone to.

23. After a time-lag, rising rolls in primary schools translate to rising rolls in secondary school. HCC's projections show 2014/15 as the start of a likely long period of sustained growth, but because of the greater degree of predictability of secondary age pupil numbers five or more years in advance, the planning of expansions to meet demand is a more

certain process. For these reasons the impact on secondary schools and FE institutions is assessed as being negligible.

## **Conclusion**

24. The impact on the majority of primary schools should be minimal as there is due to be a significant deficit of primary school places from 2012/13 in the area and any impact will be spread across a number of schools. Many of these schools are oversubscribed so even if they did lose pupils to the Free School, they should still be able to fill most or all of their places. It should also be noted that as the school wishes to open with only a 2 form reception intake, while some schools may experience a moderate impact their long-term viability would not be affected.

25. Additionally, HCC data shows the primary population is set to increase over the next few years in the district by 16.7% so any loss of pupils to the Free School should also be mitigated by the increased demand in the area. The LA is fully supportive of the school for these reasons and plans to use the proposed school to help it manage this increase.