

Title: Grindon Hall Christian School
Author: Department for Education (DfE)

Impact Assessment – Section 9 Academies Act Duty

Section 9 of the Academies Act 2010 (later as amended by the Education Act 2011) places a duty upon the Secretary of State to take into account what the impact of establishing the additional school would be likely to be on maintained schools, Academies, Alternative Provision and institutions within the further education sector in the area in which the additional school is (or is proposed to be) situated. Any adverse impact will need to be balanced against the benefits of establishing the new school.

Background

The Grindon Hall Christian School proposal is for a 560 place, 4 to 18 all-through school with a Christian ethos. It is currently an independent school and will open as a Free School in September 2012 with both existing and new pupils.

The site for the school will be the current independent school in Sunderland. It is situated in one of the most deprived areas of the country.

Admission policy and catchment area

This assessment will consider the impact on both primary and secondary schools in the area, because the Free School is all-through.

The school does not have a defined catchment area. Instead a proxy catchment has been created based on the distance travelled to school by a significant majority (80%) of pupils in Sunderland. The average distance travelled to school in Sunderland is 0.6 miles (primary) and 1.4 miles (secondary). All primary schools within a one mile radius of the Free School and all secondary schools within a 2.5 mile radius of the Free School (based on the proxy catchment area) have been included. Officials' view is that it will be unlikely that any schools situated beyond these distances will be impacted more than minimally.

Grindon Hall Free School is located in Sunderland. Table 1 below sets out the population growth in primary and secondary schools between 2010/11 and 2015/16 in Sunderland and neighbouring districts.

Table 1: Number of pupils and projections in Sunderland and neighbouring districts 2010/11 – 2015/16

		Academic year 2010/11		Academic year 2015/16		2010/11 – 2015/16
LA	Number of places in 2010	No of pupils	Surplus %	No. of pupils	Surplus %	% increase in population
Primary school pupil population						
Sunderland	23,372	20,193	13.6%	21,819	6.6%	8.1%
Durham	42,912	35,818	16.5%	37,625	12.3%	5.0%
Gateshead	15,857	13,554	14.5%	14,260	10.1%	5.2%
South Tyneside	12,469	10,418	16.4%	11,264	9.7%	8.1%
Secondary school pupil population						
Sunderland	19,550	15,668	19.9%	14,132	27.7%	-9.8%
Durham	35,078	26,402	24.7%	24,556	30.0%	-7%
Gateshead	14,076	10,635	24.4%	8,719	38.1%	-18%
South Tyneside	10,643	8,408	21.0%	7,331	31.1%	-12.8%

Note and source: The figures in this table are based on the 2011 SCAP data and covers 4 – 11 year olds in maintained primary schools and 11 – 16 year olds in maintained secondary schools.

The primary school population in Sunderland is projected to grow by 8.1% over the next five years, and the neighbouring districts of Durham, Gateshead and South Tyneside are all projected to grow. Therefore, any potential negative impact on local primary schools could be mitigated by these growing populations (although there is already an existing surplus of primary places overall).

The secondary school population is projected to fall by 9.8% over the next five years. Similarly, all neighbouring districts are projected to see falls in their secondary school population. It is unlikely that any potential negative impact on local secondary schools will be mitigated by growing populations in Sunderland and its neighbouring areas. It should however be noted that the rising primary school populations will eventually feed into the secondary school system thereby reducing the number of surplus places.

The school admissions criteria are fully compliant with the School Admissions Code. There is one derogation from the Code which Ministers have already agreed in principle, to give priority to the children of teaching staff.

If the school is oversubscribed, children will be admitted in the following order:

- Looked After Children, or children who were previously looked after but immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption, residence or special guardianship order, whom the relevant authorities and/or the parents/guardians wish to attend the School.

- Children of staff where the member of staff has been employed for at least two years at the time when the application is made; OR where the member of staff has been recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a clear skill shortage.
- Siblings of children already in the school when the new applicant is due to start. This includes cases where a sibling can reasonably be expected to still be in the School at the time of his/her sibling's proposed admission, for example a Year 11 student who could reasonably be expected to progress to Year 12. Siblings will be held to include brothers, sisters, step-brothers and step-sisters living permanently together with the child already in the School. Where a child lives with parents with shared responsibility, each for part of a week, the home address will be held to be the address under which the child is registered with his/her doctor.
- Children with significant medical or other personal need, as certified by a relevant professional.
- The child living closest to the front gate of the school, as measured from the ground floor front door of his or her permanent residence taking the most direct public rights of way.

Should two or more children remain tied after all criteria have been applied, lots will be drawn by an independent body to determine to whom the place will be allocated.

Impact ratings for primary schools

Table 2 below sets out the individual impact on each primary school located within one mile of the proposed site¹. It shows that the Free School may have a moderate impact on six schools.

Table 2: Summary of the potential impact on primary schools located within one mile of Grindon Hall Free School

School name	Distance from Free School	Impact rating
Schools with a minimal rating		
Broadway Junior School	0.34 miles	Minimal
Grindon Infant School	0.70 miles	Minimal
Schools with a moderate rating		
Academy 360	0.30 miles	Moderate
St Cuthbert's RC Primary School	0.34 miles	Moderate
St Anne's RC Primary School	0.39 miles	Moderate
Highfield Community Primary School	0.64 miles	Moderate
South Hylton Primary School	0.77 miles	Moderate
Thorney Close Primary School	0.95 miles	Moderate

Map 1: Location of primary schools included in the assessment

¹ The one mile is based on the distance that the majority (over 80%) of pupils travel to primary school in the local authority.

PHOTO REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES

Key:

1. Broadway Junior School
2. St Cuthbert's RC Primary School
3. St Anne's RC Primary School
4. Highfield Community Primary School
5. Grindon Infant School
6. South Hylton Primary School
7. Thorney Close Primary School
8. Academy 360

Schools with a moderate rating

The following section summarises what the potential impact maybe for the schools in Table 2 which have a moderate impact or moderate/high impact.

Academy 360 (0.30 miles from proposed site)

School type: Academy Sponsor Led.

Capacity: Academy 360 is a 4-16 all through school. The school has capacity for 1,065 pupils, with around 45 per year group in the primary phase (reception through to year six). There was a small surplus of around 5% of places in 2010/11. The school was however oversubscribed for primary entry in 2011/12.

Ofsted: The school was rated as inadequate by Ofsted in its latest inspection in April 2011. A monitoring inspection in December 2011 found that satisfactory progress was being made in addressing the issues for improvement.

Attainment: The school has attainment at Key Stage 2 just below the national

average, with 72% of pupils achieving the expected level in English and maths in 2011 compared with 74% nationally.

Impact: Moderate – It is the closest school to the preferred site, located less than half a mile away so the school could lose some potential pupils. The school has been rated as inadequate by Ofsted so parents may be attracted to an alternative. However, the school has had a sharp rise in attainment since 2010, and in 2011 was around the national average. The school was oversubscribed for entry in 2011/12, so even if they do lose some pupils to the Free School they may still be able to fill up most of their places – and the primary pupil population in the area will increase in the short term which may mitigate any loss of pupils. The opening of the Free School should not have a negative impact on the long-term financial viability of the school.

St Cuthbert's Roman Catholic Primary School (0.34 miles from site)

School type: Voluntary Aided Roman Catholic Primary School.

Capacity: The school has capacity for 210 pupils (around 30 pupils per year group) and had a small surplus of around 2% of places in 2010/11. The school was oversubscribed for entry in 2011/12.

Ofsted: The school was rated as satisfactory by Ofsted in its last inspection in 2008.

Attainment: The school has slightly below average attainment at Key Stage 2, with 68% of pupils achieving the expected level in English and Maths in 2010 compared with 74% nationally.

Impact: Moderate – The school is located less than half a mile from the proposed site, has Key Stage 2 attainment below the national level and a satisfactory Ofsted rating, so parents may be attracted to an alternative. However, the school is currently oversubscribed, with 70 applications for 30 places in 2011/12, so if they do lose some potential pupils they should still be able to fill all or of most of their places. Additionally it is a Roman Catholic school, so parents wanting a Catholic education for their children may not be attracted to the Free School, even though they share a Christian ethos. The opening of the Free School should not affect the long-term financial viability of the school.

St Anne's Roman Catholic Primary School (0.39 miles from site)

School type: Voluntary Aided Roman Catholic Primary School.

Capacity: The school has capacity for 210 pupils (around 30 pupils per year group) and had a small surplus of around 4% in 2010/11. The school was oversubscribed for entry in 2011/12.

Ofsted: The school was rated as satisfactory by Ofsted in its last inspection in 2009.

Attainment: The school has Key Stage 2 attainment slightly below the national level, with 69% of pupils achieving the expected level in English and maths in 2010 compared with 74% nationally.

Impact: **Moderate** – The school is located less than half a mile from the proposed site, has below average Key Stage 2 attainment and a satisfactory rating by Ofsted, so parents may be attracted to an alternative. However, the school is currently at near full capacity and was oversubscribed in 2011/12, with 78 applications for 30 places, so if they do lose some potential pupils they should still be able to fill all or most of their places. Additionally it is a Roman Catholic school, so parents wanting to send their children to a Catholic school may not be attracted to a school that does not share the same faith ethos. The opening of the Free School should not affect the long-term financial viability of the school.

Highfield Community Primary School (0.64 miles from site)

School type: Community Primary School.

Capacity: The school has capacity for 315 pupils (around 45 per year group) but had a surplus of over 10% of places in 2010/11. However, the school was oversubscribed for entry in 2011/12.

Ofsted: The school was rated as satisfactory by Ofsted in its last inspection in 2011.

Attainment: The school has Key Stage 2 attainment below average, with 50% of pupils achieving the expected level in English and maths in 2010 compared with 74% nationally.

Impact: **Moderate** – The school is located 0.64 miles from the proposed Free School site, just slightly further than the average distance travelled to primary school in Sunderland (0.6 miles). The school was rated as satisfactory in its latest Ofsted inspection, and Key Stage 2 attainment is below that national level, so parents may be attracted to an alternative and the school could lose some potential pupils. However, the school was oversubscribed for entry in 2011/12 and the primary pupil population in the area is increasing, so if they do lose some potential pupils they should still be able to fill most or all of their places. The opening of the Free School should not affect the long-term financial viability of the school.

South Hylton Primary School (0.77 miles from site)

School type: Community Primary School.

Capacity: The school has capacity for 243 pupils (around 60 per year group) but had a relatively large surplus of around 19% of places in 2010/11. The school was undersubscribed for entry in 2011/12, filling 44 of their 60 places.

Ofsted: The school was rated as good by Ofsted in its last inspection in May 2012.

Attainment: The school has below average attainment at Key Stage 2, with 67% of pupils achieving the expected level in English and maths in 2011 compared with 74% nationally.

Impact: Moderate – The school is located under a mile from the proposed site, slightly further than the average distance travelled to primary school in Sunderland (0.6 miles). The school has attainment below the national level, so parents may be attracted to an alternative. The school currently has a relatively large number of surplus places and was undersubscribed for entry in 2011/12 so the opening of the Free School could further exacerbate this issue. However, the school was recently inspected by Ofsted, who found it to be a good school, with outstanding behaviour and highly positive attitudes to learning. This positive report is likely to lessen the relative attraction of the Free School in the eyes of some parents. Also, the distinct Christian ethos of the Free School will not appeal to some parents. The opening of the Free School should not affect the long-term financial viability of the school.

Thorney Close Primary School (0.95 miles from site)

School type: Community Primary School

Capacity: The school has capacity for 315 pupils (around 37 per year group) but had a large surplus of around 37% of places in 2010/11. The school filled most of its places in 2011/12.

Ofsted: The school was rated as satisfactory by Ofsted in its last inspection in February 2012. Early Years and Reception education was considered to be good, and there was evidence of improvement since the previous Ofsted inspection.

Attainment: The school has below average attainment at Key Stage 2, with 52% of pupils achieving the expected level in English and Maths in 2011 compared with 74% nationally. These figures are worse than they were in 2007, although it has not been a consistent downward trend.

Impact: Moderate – The school has Key Stage 2 attainment below the national figure average and a satisfactory Ofsted rating, so parents may be attracted by an alternative. The school currently has a relatively large number of surplus places and failed to fill all of their places for 2011/12. However, the school is beyond the average distance travelled to primary schools, so parents living near to Thorney Close may not be attracted to the Free School. Also, the distinct Christian ethos of the Free School will not appeal to some parents. The opening of the Free School should not significantly affect the surplus places issue, and is not expected to have an unacceptable impact on the financial viability of the school.

Impact ratings for secondary schools

Table 5 below sets out the individual impact on each secondary school located within two and a half miles of the proposed site². It shows that the Free School may have a moderate impact on three schools and a high impact on three schools (including one moderate/high school).

Table 3: Summary of the potential impact on secondary schools located within 2.5 miles of the Grindon Hall Free School.

School name	Distance from Free School	Impact rating
Schools with a minimal rating		
Farringdon Community Sports College	1.63 miles	Minimal
St Anthony's Catholic Girls' School	1.84 miles	Minimal
St Aidan's Catholic School	1.93 miles	Minimal
Schools with a moderate rating		
Sandhill View School	0.63 miles	Moderate
Red House Academy	2.38 miles	Moderate
Southmoor Community School, Mathematics and Computing College	2.44 miles	Moderate
Thornhill School Business & Enterprise College	1.77 miles	Moderate/High
Schools with a high rating		
Academy 360	0.30 miles	High
Castle View Enterprise Academy	1.61 miles	High

Map 2: Location of secondary schools included in the assessment

² The 2.5 mile distance is based on the distance that the majority (over 80%) of pupils travel to secondary school in the local authority.

PHOTO REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES



Key:

1. Academy 360
 2. Sandhill View School
 3. Castle View Enterprise Academy
 4. Farringdon Community Sports College
 5. Thornhill School Business and Enterprise College
 6. St Anthony's Catholic Girls' School
 7. St Aidan's Catholic School
 8. Southmoor Community School, Mathematics and Computing College
- N.B. Red House Academy is just off the map, to the North.

Schools with a high impact rating

The following section summarises what the potential impact may be on the schools in Table 3 which have a high impact.

Academy 360 (0.3 miles from site)

School type: Academy Sponsor led.

Capacity: Academy 360 is a 4-16 all through school. The school has capacity for 1,065 pupils, with around 165 pupils per year group in the secondary phase. There was a small surplus of around 5% of places in 2010/11. The school was undersubscribed for secondary entry 2011/12 with 95 pupils allocated for 165 places.

Ofsted: The school was rated as inadequate by Ofsted in its latest inspection in April 2011. A monitoring inspection in December 2011 found that satisfactory progress was being made in addressing the issues for improvement.

Attainment: The school has Key Stage 4 attainment well below the national figure – 35% of pupils achieved 5+ A*-C grades including English and maths GCSE in 2010/11 compared with 58% nationally. This figure does, however, represent an 18 percentage point improvement from 2009.

Impact: High – It is the closest school to the preferred site, located well below the average distance travelled to secondary school in Sunderland (1.4 miles) so could lose some potential pupils. The school has relatively poor attainment and a poor Ofsted rating, so parents may well be attracted to an alternative. It is currently undersubscribed with surplus capacity so the opening of the Free School could further exacerbate the existing surplus issue in this school. However, since the end of 2011 there is new management at the school, and Ofsted noted that there were signs of improvement. Nevertheless, the opening of the Free School may affect the financial viability of the school in the short term, as the secondary school population declines. Longer term the increasing primary school population is expected to ease the pressure on this school, as its all-through pupils move up.

Additional information on Academy 360

Attainment time series

Table 4 below provides a time series of KS4 attainment and shows that the percentage of pupils achieving 5+ A*-C including English and maths GCSE. Whilst attainment is well below the national average, results have improved each year since the academy opened, with the percentage of pupils achieving 5+ A*-C grades including English and maths rising by 18 percentage points from 17% in 2009 to 35% in 2011.

Table 4: Key Stage 4 attainment – Percentage of pupils achieving 5+ A-C (and equivalent) including English and maths GCSE*

Year	Percentage of pupils achieving GCSEs 5A* to C including English and maths
2009	17%
2010	21%
2011	35%

Ofsted inspection details

Academy 360 was last inspected in April 2011, and received an overall effectiveness rating of inadequate.

The Ofsted inspection of 2011 noted that:

- The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals and the proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are all above average.

- There was significant staff turbulence in both predecessor schools during the year prior to their closure and this continued during the first eighteen months of the academy's existence. A number of subject leader posts remained unfilled during this time.
- Developing a new academy quickly, from predecessor schools with their own ways of working, the history of underachievement in the secondary school, the move to the new building and staff turbulence, all had a particularly detrimental impact on students' outcomes in 2010. Students' attainment in Year 11 was also well below average but there was significant improvement in the proportion attaining five good GCSEs from 2009.
- The academy has developed a robust assessment process to capture students' progress and achievements regularly and majority of students are now making satisfactory progress in their lessons.

Ofsted noted a number of areas where the school needed to improve:

- Raise standards and hasten the rate of progress students make in their learning, particularly in the middle and upper phases; improve the quality and impact of teaching.
- Improve students' behaviour by developing teachers' skills in managing students' behaviour, and ensuring that the academy's behaviour management procedures are consistently and fairly applied.
- Develop additional strategies to ensure there is a marked increase in attendance rates and that all students arrive punctually to lessons.

Conclusion from additional information

Attainment at KS4 is improving (albeit from a very low level), and the Ofsted report notes that there have been improvements in the quality of teaching and in the progress students are making. The academy has satisfactory capacity to improve, but the introduction of the new Free School could make this more difficult if potential pupils (especially if they are at the higher end of the ability range) choose instead to go the new Free School. Any pupil loss would not be mitigated by growth in the secondary pupil population in the short term.

Castle View Enterprise Academy (1.61 miles from site)

School type: Academy Sponsor led.

Capacity: The school has capacity for 900 pupils, but had a surplus of around 14% of places in 2010/11. The school was undersubscribed for entry 2011/12, filling 163 out of 180 places.

Ofsted: The school was rated as good by Ofsted in its last inspection in 2011.

Attainment: The school has Key Stage 4 attainment below the national figure – 54% of pupils achieved 5+ A*-C grades including English and maths GCSE in 2010/11 compared with 58% nationally.

Impact: **High** – The school is located 1.6 miles from the proposed site, around

the average distance travelled to secondary school in Sunderland (1.4 miles). The school has below average attainment so parents may be attracted to an alternative. The school currently has surplus places and is undersubscribed for entry, so the opening of the Free School could further exacerbate the issue and potentially have a negative impact on the long term financial viability of the school.

Additional information on Castle View Enterprise Academy

Academy status

Castle View Enterprise Academy opened as a sponsor-led academy in September 2009.

Attainment time series

Table 5 below provides a time series of KS4 attainment and shows that the percentage of pupils achieving 5+ A*-C including English and maths GCSE rose by eleven percentage points between 2010 and 2011.

Table 5: Key Stage 4 attainment – Percentage of pupils achieving 5+ A-C (and equivalent) including English and maths GCSE*

Year	Percentage of pupils achieving GCSEs 5A* to C including English and maths
2009	N/A
2010	43%
2011	54%

Ofsted inspection details

Castle View Enterprise Academy was inspected in January 2011, and received an overall effectiveness rating of Good.

The Ofsted report noted that:

- The percentage of students known to be eligible for free school meals is almost twice the national average. The number of students identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities are well above average although, of these, the number with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The quality of teaching and assessment are improving rapidly due to robust monitoring and evaluation by senior and middle managers. This has been evident as good progress has been made in raising attainment in English and mathematics.
- Behaviour was good and most often exemplified by good levels of attention in lessons, positive attitudes to learning, good listening skills, and a genuine willingness to engage positively in individual, pair, group or whole-class activities.

Ofsted noted where the school needed to improve:

- Continue to improve the students' rate of progress and thus their levels of attainment.
- Continue to improve the quality of teaching so that overall it reaches at least a consistently good standard.
- Ensure the curriculum, guidance and support offered to students consistently match students' needs and aptitudes.

Conclusion from additional information

Attainment is rising and Ofsted note that the academy has made good progress towards raising standards and has good capacity to improve further. The introduction of the new Free School may make it more difficult for the school to carry on improving if potential pupils chose instead to go the new Free School (especially if they are at the higher end of the ability range) and any pupil loss would not be mitigated by growth in the secondary pupil population in the short term.

Thornhill School Business & Enterprise College (1.77 miles from site)

School type: Community Secondary School.

Capacity: The school has capacity for 1,368 pupils, but had surplus of around 30% of places in 2010/11. The school was undersubscribed for entry in 2011/12, filling only 80% of its 210 places.

Ofsted: The school was rated as Good by Ofsted in its last inspection in 2008.

Attainment: The school has Key Stage 4 attainment below the national figure – 46% of pupils achieved 5+ A*-C grades including English and maths GCSE in 2011 compared with 58% nationally.

Impact: **Moderate/high** – The school is located slightly above the average distance travelled to secondary school in Sunderland (1.4 miles), but has below average attainment, so parents may be prepared for pupils to travel slightly further for an alternative. The school currently has a relatively large number of surplus places and was unable to fill all of its places in 2011/12, so the opening of the Free School could exacerbate the issue and there could be a negative impact on the long- term viability of the school.

Additional information on Thornhill School Business & Enterprise College

Academy status

Thornhill School has not applied to convert to academy status.

Attainment time series

Table 6 below provides a time series of KS4 attainment going back to 2007. Results improved each year from 2007 to 2010, when the percentage achieving 5+ A*-C including English and maths GCSE was just below the national level. Provisional results for 2011 indicate that there has however

been a drop in attainment from 2010 by seven percentage points.

Table 6: Key Stage 4 attainment – Percentage of pupils achieving 5 A to C at GCSE including English and maths, 2007-2011*

Year	Percentage of pupils achieving 5 A* to C GCSEs including English and maths
2007	27%
2008	41%
2009	43%
2010	53%
2011	46%

Ofsted inspection details

The school was last inspected in December 2008 and received an overall effectiveness rating of Good.

The Ofsted report noted the following:

- A rising proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups is broadly average, although most of these pupils have English as an additional language. Almost a third of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities.
- The school provides a good quality of education, taking in pupils with below average standards and making good progress in their learning.
- The school's curriculum is outstanding, providing all pupils, including those interested in work-related learning, with an opportunity to pursue their own interests and to succeed.
- Behaviour during lessons and around the school is good. Attendance is broadly average although a small number of persistent non-attendees adversely affect overall attendance rates despite the best efforts of the school.
- The clear and effective leadership of the headteacher has ensured there is a secure focus on raising standards and meeting the needs of all pupils. The school is well led and managed, and has good and strengthening capacity to improve.

Ofsted noted where the school needed to improve:

- Ensure pupils make better progress and attain higher standards through improving the quality and consistency by which teachers and departments mark work, providing them with feedback and establishing a consistent approach to homework that supports learning effectively.

Conclusion from additional information

Attainment has been improving, though there appears to be a drop in 2011. Ofsted note that the majority of pupils make good progress in their learning because much has been done to improve pupils' performance in English and maths in recent years, and that the sustained improvement in a number of

areas demonstrates there is good and strengthening capacity to improve. The introduction of the new Free School may make it more difficult for the school to carry on improving if potential pupils chose instead to go the new Free School (especially if they are at the higher end of the ability range) and any pupil loss would not be mitigated by growth in the secondary pupil population in the short term.

Schools with a moderate impact rating

The following section summarises what the potential impact may be for the schools in Table 5 which have a moderate impact.

Sandhill View School (0.63 miles from the proposed site)

School type: Community Secondary School.

Capacity: The school has capacity for 900 pupils (around 180 pupils per year group) but had a small surplus of around 2% of places in 2010/11. The school was undersubscribed for entry in 2011/12 with 167 places allocated out of 180.

Ofsted: The school was rated as Good by Ofsted in its last inspection in 2007.

Attainment: The school has Key Stage 4 attainment below the national figure – 50% of pupils achieved 5+ A*-C grades including English and maths GCSE in 2010/11 compared with 58% nationally.

Impact: **Moderate** – The school is located less than a mile from the proposed site, less than the average distance travelled to secondary school in Sunderland (1.4 miles), and has attainment below the national figure so parents may be tempted to an alternative and the school could lose some potential pupils to the new Free School. However, the school has a Good Ofsted rating and filled most of its places in 2011/12. The school is currently at near capacity, so even if they do lose some potential pupils to the Free School it should not have a negative impact on the long-term viability of the school.

Red House Academy (2.38 miles from the proposed site)

School type: Academy Sponsor led.

Capacity: The school has capacity for 600 pupils, but had a surplus of around 8% in 2010/11. The school was oversubscribed for entry in 2011/12.

Ofsted: The school was rated as Satisfactory by Ofsted in its last inspection in 2011.

Attainment: The school has Key Stage 4 attainment well below the national figure – 19% of pupils achieved 5+ A*-C grades including English and maths GCSE in 2011 compared with 58% nationally.

Impact: Moderate –The school is rated as Satisfactory by Ofsted and has attainment well below the national level, so parents may be tempted by an alternative. However, the school is located around a mile further the average distance travelled to secondary school (1.4 miles) in Sunderland, so they may not lose a significant number of potential pupils. The school is also currently oversubscribed, filling of all its places in 2011/12, so if they do lose some potential pupils should still be able to fill most or all of its places. The opening of the Free School should not have a negative impact on the long term financial viability of the school.

Southmoor Community School, Mathematics and Computing College (2.44 miles from the proposed site)

School type: Community School.

Capacity: The school has capacity for 1,399 pupils, but had a relatively large surplus of around 28% of places in 2010/11. The school was undersubscribed for entry in 2011/12, filling 187 of its 210 places.

Ofsted: The school was rated as Good by Ofsted in its last inspection in 2008.

Attainment: The school has Key Stage 4 attainment in the top 25%, with 68% of pupils achieving 5+ A*-C grades including English and maths GCSE in 2011 compared with 58% nationally.

Impact: Moderate – The school currently has a relatively large number of surplus places and failed to fill all of its places in 2011/12, so if they do lose a significant number of potential pupils the problem could be further exacerbated. However, the school is located over a mile further than the average distance travelled to secondary school in Sunderland (2.44 miles), has a Good Ofsted rating and attainment in the top 25% of schools, so they should not lose a large number of potential pupils and the opening of the Free School should not affect the long term financial viability of the school.

Impact on Special Schools, Alternative Provision and FE Institutions

Grindon Hall is an all-through independent school situated in Sunderland, proposed to convert to a Free School in 2012. It currently has one class per year group with a capacity of 310 but will increase to two classes per year group across the whole school (Reception through to Year 13) and at full capacity will have 560 pupils. 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 through other external agencies or specialists. As such, it is unlikely to have any direct impact on local Special Schools or Alternative provision. With regard to FE Institutions, Grindon Hall has a small Sixth Form (20 students in Years 12 and 13) and it is therefore the impact is likely to be minimal.

Consultation

Grindon Hall ran their second consultation in May 2012. The level of response to their second consultation was much smaller than that received in their first in 2011, although the outcome was the same. The same two key findings which have re-emerged are:

a) the notion of a high-quality free education being made available to Pennywell residents, within an already successful and well-established school, is hugely popular with prospective and existing parents alike; and

b) the criticism from those objecting to the Free School is that its presence may reduce the resources available to other local schools which, these opponents contend, are already providing as good an education as Grindon Hall Christian School.

No further issues have been raised as part of the 2012 exercise. Grindon Hall placed an advertisement in the local newspaper, developed an information pack for local people and key stakeholders, and distributed leaflets to 6,800 homes located within the two housing areas surrounding the school site.

Overall the majority of responses received fell heavily in favour of the Free School plan, and the support was overwhelmingly in favour of enabling local children to access the recognised high-quality of education and care currently provided by GHCS. However, negative comments raised were as follows:

- A local school viewed that there is no significant difference between local schools and GHCS and there is therefore no need for additional choice for parents. Claims are also made that GHCS curriculum is not sufficiently broad and balanced and that local schools will suffer financial loss if children opt for GHCS rather than for them.
- Local residents felt that existing schools are good enough for local residents and could suffer a drop in numbers and funding if children opt for GHCS instead.

Local Authority view

The Department wrote to the local authority on 30 April requesting the authority's view as to the impact of the Free School on other local schools in the area.

Sunderland has a diversity of school provision already across all age ranges which includes community schools, voluntary-aided schools for both the Church of England and Roman Catholic Dioceses and academies. These schools work collaboratively within a partnership which recognises this diversity and the different governance arrangements that this involves, but which ultimately works together in the best interests of all children and young people. Grindon Hall has been invited to be part of these arrangements

through the Secondary Heads Partnership and has indicated a willingness to be part of it.

Sunderland City Council feel that this will clearly be of huge importance given the impact that additional places proposed at Grindon Hall will have on schools in the immediate area, particularly primary schools. Currently local primary schools are fully subscribed due to an upturn in the birth rate but this is considered to be a temporary position in the event that the birth rate declines, and the full impact will only be able to be assessed over time.

Sunderland City Council are concerned that because the Funding Agreement has not been signed, Grindon Hall is not able to offer places to those parents who may have requested them, which in turn means that when their places are offered, there may be a drop in numbers at other local primary schools, particularly in Reception. This could cause some instability around numbers from September, and a more pressing issue is the uncertainty caused for families who are unsure even now whether they have places at Grindon or at one of the local primary schools.

Sunderland City Council also raised how important it will be for Grindon to work collaboratively to ensure that the needs of Sunderland's most vulnerable children, many of whom live in the area local to the Free School, are met. The admissions policy needs to continue to be inclusive of all children and young people and they felt that other Sunderland schools can support the school in terms of behaviour, attendance and Special Educational Needs policies.

Other representations

The Department has received a number of representations from parents whose children currently attend the nursery at Grindon Hall, but who are not eligible to automatically transfer into Reception in September 2012. Lord Hill responded to these representations to clarify that children transferring from nursery to primary provision must complete a separate application, and that a child's attendance at a nursery class does not guarantee admission to the school for primary education.

Conclusion

The overall impact on primary and secondary schools in the area should be minimal. The primary school population in Sunderland is projected to grow by 8.1% over the next five years, and the neighbouring districts of County Durham, Gateshead and South Tyneside are all projected to grow. Attainment levels in some local secondary schools is below the national figure and there is concern that the introduction of the Free School may make it difficult for them to improve further if potential pupils transfer to Grindon Hall, increasing their surplus places and possibly impacting on the long-term viability of the schools if the secondary school population declines. However, it is reasonable to conclude that given the small size of Grindon Hall and the number of places on offer after existing children transfer over from the Independent to the Free School, the overall impact on other primary and secondary schools in the area

should be minimal. Although there is an existing surplus of 13.6% of places in Sunderland's primary schools, and the secondary school population is projected to fall by 9.8% over the next five years, officials have concluded that any potential negative impact on local primary schools could be mitigated by growing populations and that this rising primary school population will eventually feed into the secondary school system.

Given all this information, we consider that Grindon Hall Christian School will have a positive impact on maintained schools, Academies, Alternative Provision and FE institutions in the surrounding area.