

Title: The Hawthorne's Free School- Impact Assessment 2012
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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 what the impact of establishing the additional school would be likely to be on maintained schools, Academies, institutions within the further education sector and alternative provision.
2. The rationale for establishing a Free School is to retain a secondary school in a very deprived community in response to parental demand, given the LA's plan to close 2 existing local schools, St George of England High School and St Wilfred's RC High School. The intention is to use the St George school building as the site for the new school to open in September 2012. The expectation being that the majority of pupils from both closing schools will choose to attend the new Free School alongside a new Year 7 cohort. Admission numbers are currently expected to be in the range 475 – 490 against an admission number in year 1 of 510.
3. The Hawthorne's Free School is an 11 – 16, non-denominational school with a Christian ethos seeking to open in 2012 with an initial capacity of 510 in the first year, rising to 600 pupils over time. This gradual increase in capacity is because some of the year groups in the upper years of the school are likely to be below capacity in the early years given the numbers in the 2 closing schools, from which the Free School will principally attract pupils.
4. The Academy Trust is made up from the Church of England and parents and educationalists from the local schools due to close. The chair of Hawthorne's Free School Trust is Archdeacon Ricky Panter.

Admissions Catchment Area and Characteristics

Admissions

5. The Free School admissions will be for 120 pupils for each year group if sufficient applications for entry are received. Where fewer than the published admission number(s) for the relevant year groups are received, the Free School Trust will offer places at the Free School to all those who have applied.
6. When the Free School is oversubscribed, after the admission of pupils with Statements of Special Educational Needs where the school is named in the Statement, priority for admission will be given to those children who meet the criteria set out below, in priority order:
 - a) Children who are in public care when preferences are expressed and who are expected to still be in public care when they go to the school
 - b) Children who have a brother or sister living in the same house who already attend the school, as long as they will still be at the school in September 2012
 - c) Children who, at the start of the Spring Term 2012, are on the rolls of any primary school in the Bootle or Litherland areas

d) Other requests that name the school as a preference

6. If it is not possible to offer places for all applications within any criteria, priority will be given to those living closest to the school measured by the shortest walking distance from the child's home to the property's address point.
7. Random allocation will be used as a tie-break in categories b-d above to decide who has highest priority for admission if the distance between a child's home and the Free School is equidistant in any two or more cases.
8. The Trust will give priority to brother and/or sister connections in its policy for allocating places. The definition of brother or sister includes step-brothers, step-sisters, half-brothers, half-sisters and adopted brothers and sisters living at the same permanent address. However, where the school is over-subscribed no guarantee can be given that places will be available for brothers and sisters. Where the final place in a year group is offered to one of twins or other multiple births the parent has to decide which child will take up the place.
9. Where in any year the Free School receives more applications for places than there are places available, a waiting list will operate until the end of the first term after the beginning of the school year. This will be maintained by the Free School Trust and it will be open to any parent to ask for his or her child's name to be placed on the waiting list, following an unsuccessful application. Children's position on the waiting list will be determined solely in accordance with the oversubscription criteria. Where places become vacant they will be allocated to children on the waiting list in accordance with the oversubscription criteria.
10. The Free School will operate an Appeals policy with appeals made to the Governors at the Hawthorne's Free School for a hearing by an Independent appeals panel, set up in line with requirements of the School Standards Framework Act 1998, giving the Chair of Governors notice of appeal within 14 days of receiving the your decision letter.

Catchment Area

11. For the purpose of this impact assessment, we have considered that the catchment area for pupils travelling to school is within a 4 mile radius from the proposed site of the Hawthorne's Free School. This will cover the proposed catchment of the Free School. It should also ensure that we fully assess the potential impact of the new school bearing in mind the distance travelled by at least 80% of pupils in the local authority of Sefton is only 2.5 miles and the average travelling distance to school is approximately 1.51 miles.
12. There are 9 secondary schools identified within the catchment area (excluding the two schools that are due to close in 2012). These are as follows:
 - Litherland High School
 - Savio Salesian College
 - Archbishop Beck Catholic Sports College
 - Hillside High School
 - Sacred Heart Catholic College
 - St Ambrose Barlow Catholic College
 - Alsop High School Technology & Applied Learning Specialist College
 - Chesterfield High School

- Holy Family Catholic High School

Secondary pupil population

13. The number of surplus places in secondary school in Sefton LA as at 2010-11 was estimated at 21.9% and surplus places are expected to increase to 26.7% by 2015-16.

14. In 2010-11 secondary school pupil population figures in Sefton in were at 16,518. Pupil numbers are expected to fall by 6.1% between now and 2015-16 before starting to increase again in 2017-18 (when the projected number of pupils is 5.8% below the current figure).

Capacity				Number of pupils				
Capacity as at May 2011	Surplus capacity 2010/11	Projected surplus capacity 2015/16	Projected surplus capacity 2017/18	Actual 2010/11	Forecast 2015/16	Forecast 2017/18	% increase in pupil numbers, 2010/11 - 2015/16	%increase in pupil numbers, 2010/11 - 2017/18
21158	21.9%	26.7%	26.5%	16518	15513	15554	-6.1	-5.8

Local Authority Views

15. The views of Sefton and Liverpool City local authorities were sought. Both local authorities expressed concern about the potential impact of a Free School on existing secondary schools, particularly in South Sefton. Sefton local authority also states that the analysis of surplus places in South Sefton shows circa 2000 current surplus places. The number of surplus places within the area we have assessed is around 1000.

Representations

16. The Department has received a number of letters and emails expressing the view that the St Wilfrid's site would have been the better option for the Free School site. The Department worked with EFA and the proposer group to try and obtain the site for the Free School's use but after discussions, the Catholic Church were not prepared to make it available for use by the school. A public consultation has been carried out by the proposer group. Hawthorne's s10 consultation took place over a six week period commencing on 21 February 2012. The formal consultation comprised of public meetings, an online questionnaire on the school's website, letters to key stakeholders, promotion in the local community and press adverts in local newspapers. Within the questionnaire, the specific question was posed of whether the Academy Trust should enter a funding agreement. A link was provided on the website to the model funding agreement. The Academy Trust consulted on an appropriate range of questions including vision, curriculum, admissions and the school buildings. The proposers undertook an exercise to identify an appropriate range of stakeholders to consult. Overall, 93% of respondents answered 'yes' to the question of whether the Trust should enter into a funding agreement.

17. Set out below is an analysis of the likely impact on the nearest schools to the proposed Hawthorne's Free School site within the 4 miles catchment area. The impact is based on a scoring rating and this shows that out of nine secondary schools identified, three are considered to feel a moderate impact and six will feel a minimal impact.

School name	Distance from Free School	Impact rating	Capacity	Pupils on roll	% Surplus places
Savio Salesian College	0.82	Moderate	899	627	30%
Litherland High School	0.79	Moderate	1200	892	26%
St Ambrose Barlow Catholic College	2.06	Moderate	600	433	28%
Chesterfield High School	1.54	Minimal	1326	1271	4%
Holy Family Catholic High School	2.16	Minimal	876	838	4%
Archbishop Beck Catholic Sports College	1.65	Minimal	1468	1240	16%
Hillside High School	1.7	Minimal	972	882	9%
Sacred Heart Catholic College	1.85	Minimal	1354	1391	-3%
Alsop High School Technology College	2.06	Minimal	1800	1787	1%

18. The Free School is likely to draw principally from the two closing schools, St George and St Wilfrid's. Currently, there are 580 pupils in these 2 schools, with around 100 of these pupils set to leave this summer, leaving around 480 pupils looking for alternative secondary provision. The net number of places added by the Free School is therefore just over 100, bearing in mind its planned capacity of 600.

Schools where the impact is moderate

3 of the nine schools within the catchment area are expected to feel a moderate impact when the free school opens:

Savio Salesian College

19. Savio Salesian is 30% undersubscribed and has a current pupil roll of 627. It is located within a mile of the Free School. The school's attainment at 5 GCSEs (A to C inc M&E) is only 43%, which is considerably below the 59.5% Sefton average and all of the other schools in the catchment area. This may be a consideration for parents looking for an alternative but as Savio Salesian is a Roman Catholic school parents there may not wish to transfer pupils to a Free School with a Christian ethos. In addition, Ofsted rate the school as 'good', which may also enable it to retain pupils in the face of competition from the Free School. It is also likely that this school will benefit by attracting some of the pupils displaced by the closure of St Wilfrid's Catholic High School. Given that the school is relatively small, however, any loss of pupils could have implications for its future viability. So, overall, we assess that the impact on this school is moderate.

Litherland High School

20. Litherland High is a non-faith school located within a mile of Hawthorne's. The school has 892 pupils on roll, 26% surplus places and attainment at 5 GCSEs (A to C inc M&E) of 47%. As the school that is closest to the location of the Free School, Litherland is the most likely to be impacted by its opening, especially as the relatively low GCSE results may mean parents are looking for an alternative and are therefore attracted by the Free School. This impact is likely to be mitigated by 2 factors. First, some parents at Litherland may not wish to move their children to a Free School with a faith ethos. Secondly, Litherland has been rated as outstanding by Ofsted which may weigh more heavily with some parents than

GCSE results. Overall, therefore, we have assessed the impact on this school as moderate.

St Ambrose Barlow Catholic College

21. St Ambrose Barlow has a high number of surplus places at 28% and is performing slightly below the Sefton's attainment average for 5 GCSEs (A to C inc E&M) at 58%. Ofsted rated the school as good. Given this school is performing reasonably well, is a Catholic school and is located further from the Free School than the average travelling distance, it is unlikely that many parents would choose the Free School in preference to this school. It is also possible that this school will attract some of the pupils displaced by the closure of St Wilfrid's Catholic High School. However, as the school has a large percentage of surplus places and a relatively small pupil roll, its viability could be adversely affected by the loss of any pupils to the Free School. Overall, therefore, we have assessed the impact on this school as moderate.

Schools where the impact is minimal

22. Six of the nine schools within the catchment area are expected to feel a minimal impact when the Free School opens:

Chesterfield High School

23. Chesterfield High is a recent Academy converter school with a roll of 1271 and relatively low numbers of surplus places (4%). Its attainment is below average for Sefton which arguably could make the Free School an attractive alternative for parents. However, the school is rated good by Ofsted, is further from the Free School than the average travelling distance in the LA and is unlikely to be affected by the loss of some pupils to the Free School, given it has a relatively large roll and relatively few surplus places. Overall, therefore, we have assessed the impact on this school to be minimal

Archbishop Beck Catholic Sports College

24. Archbishop Beck is 16% undersubscribed and has below average attainment (47% 5 A to C inc M&E). Parents with children at this school may therefore find the Free School an attractive alternative. However, the number of parents who choose the Free School over this school is likely to be limited by the fact that it is over 1.5 miles away from the Free School, has a different faith character and has been rated as good by Ofsted. Furthermore, as a relatively large school, any loss of pupils to the Free School would not have a serious impact on its viability, especially as might attract some pupils from the closing St Wilfrid's. We have therefore assessed on this school to be minimal.

Holy Family Catholic High School

25. Holy is the furthest distance from Hawthorne's of all schools in the catchment area (2.16 miles) and has a relatively small number of surplus places at 4%. Holy was rated by Ofsted as good and is performing above Sefton's attainment average for 5 GCSEs (A to C in M&E) at 61%. Given that this school is performing well, has a different faith character to the Free School, is located relatively far from the Free School and in any case is unlikely to be seriously affected by the loss of some pupils given that is currently almost full and may indeed attract some pupils from the closing St Wilfrid's, we have assessed the impact on it to be minimal.

Hillside High; Sacred Heart Catholic College School and Alsop High School Technology College

26. All these schools were judged by Ofsted to be outstanding and are located further from the Free School than the average travelling distance for Sefton. Therefore it is less likely that parents would consider the Free School as their first option before these particular schools.

Impact on primary schools and colleges

27. Hawthorne's Free School will be an 11-16 institution so there will be no adverse impact on local primary schools and colleges. However, the Free School will potentially have a positive impact in terms of providing additional choice for parents with children at local primary schools and in becoming a feeder for local post-16 provision.

Conclusion

28. Due to the closure of both St George's and St Wilfrid's in 2012, the net number of new places added by the Free School is just over 100. Although surplus places are likely to rise in the area over coming years due to falling demographics, this is a relatively small number of places to be subsumed by the local secondary school sector. Indeed, as can be seen from our analysis above, the Free School is unlikely to make any other local school unviable, with only 3 schools likely to suffer as much as a moderate impact as a result of its establishment. Indeed, any negative impact of establishing the Free School could be outweighed by the positives that it will create greater choice for parents (by offering the only non-Catholic faith provision in the area) and greater competition for local schools, most of which have below average attainment, thereby helping to drive up educational standards in the local area.