

Title: The Free School Norwich

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Annex A: Impact Assessment – Section 9 Academies Act Duty

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 likely to be on maintained schools, Academies and institutions within the further education sector in the area in which the additional schools is (or is proposed to be) situated.

Background

Free School Norwich (FSN) will be a 168 place 5-11 school offering wrap-around care for pupils 6 days a week for 51 weeks of the year. The proposal was conceived from a genuine demand in the Norwich area for year-round high quality integrated education and child-care at a reasonable cost. It has, thus, proved to be particularly attractive to working parents.

In September 2011, FSN will open with 4 classes (reception through to Year 3) and will build up over four years admitting a new reception class each year. Due to the high number of existing infant and junior schools in the schools system in Norwich, it is common for pupils to leave an infant school after year 2 and join a new junior school at year 3 level. As a result of the infant and junior School system and the demand for this type of provision in Norwich, FSN are oversubscribed for places for Reception and Year 3 in 2011.

There are a number of secondary maintained schools, Academies and FE institutions in the city of Norwich within 4 miles of the planned site of The Free School Norwich (FSN). As discussed below, our assessment is that this proposal, for a primary school admitting children aged 5-11, would not have a direct impact on any secondary schools or post-16 institutions, including Academies.

Therefore, this impact assessment has focussed primarily on potential impact of the proposed school on local maintained primary schools. The assessment looks at where children who might attend the proposed school may otherwise have gone to school and also looks at the area upon which the impact of the proposal could potentially fall.

The benefits of increasing parental choice and widening the number and types of places in local primary state provision in Norwich, as well as the potential increase in the economic well-being of children in Norfolk by enabling their parents to work have also been taken into account when conducting the impact assessment.

There is supporting evidence, which FSN highlighted in their business case, showing an expected growth in the number of households in the Norwich area in the next ten years, with 2000 homes planned. The demand for school places is, therefore, expected to grow as a result. This has also been taken into account when conducting the assessment.

Catchment Area

FSN's admissions policy is fully compliant with the admissions code. If the school is over-subscribed, priority (after first accepting children with statements of SEN on which FSN has been named) will be given in the following order:

1. Children in public care (Looked After Children).
2. Children who are due to start school and who have a brother or sister attending the school at the time of their admission.
3. Children who are due to start school and whose front door is within a six mile radius of the front door of the school.

If it is not clear who has priority for the final places either within criteria 2 or 3 above, places will be determined by random allocation.

The LA admissions team conducted an analysis of the places allocated to date with a particular interest in the applications for the oversubscribed year groups: Reception and Year 3. Their analysis showed FSN having a wide catchment area, with Reception places being spread between 16 catchment areas, and, in Year 3, places spread between catchment areas for 14 schools.

This is in line with officials and proposers' original expectations. There are significant numbers who commute daily to Norwich from all parts of Norfolk and proposers believed that offering an extended school would address the demand generated by this client group.

Taking into account the projections for an increase in demand for school places over the next 10 years, together with the size of FSN and the expectation that it will draw its pupils from a wide catchment area, it is reasonable to conclude that the impact of the increased provision will not be significant at individual school level because the impact will be dispersed across a wide area.

The permanent site for the proposed FSN site is Kings Building, Surrey Road, NR1 3NX. FSN have completed their allocation of offers to pupils and officials have noted that of the 67 pupils who have so far accepted offers the furthest lives as far as approximately 20 miles by road away from the site. Also, currently, there are 9 pupils who have accepted places who live more than 5 miles away.

The average distance pupils will be travelling to the FSN proposed site is 2.8 miles and the majority of pupils who have been allocated places live within 1-4 miles. On this basis, we have gathered information about all 42 maintained primary schools situated within 4 miles by road of The Free School Norwich Site, as displayed in **Table 1**.

The key characteristics of FSN's catchment area for September 2011 are that parents are willing to travel from far away to attend the school, the majority of pupils live within 4 miles and pupils will be drawn from all over Norwich and parts of Norfolk outside the city. It is likely, therefore, that, applications for future years will not be driven by proximity to the school but primarily by parents' work and commuting needs and, as a result, it is difficult to estimate numbers of pupils being drawn from any one school in the long term.

Nearby maintained primary schools

Table 1 shows that, of the 42 schools, 10 have more pupils on roll than their planned pupil number provides for and that 21 of the schools were rated good and 5 rated outstanding by Ofsted at their last inspection. Given FSN does not have an established track record, its size and wide catchment area, it is unlikely to have an adverse impact on high performing, oversubscribed schools, either initially or over time.

The knock-on impact of FSN is more likely to be significant for local schools which are underperforming and are operating with surplus capacity. Schools like these are normally more vulnerable to losing children when additional school places become available elsewhere. The table also shows that within a 4 mile radius, 32 schools have surplus places, 14 of which have a surplus

of < 20%. One of these, **Larkman Primary School**, situated 2.7 miles from FSN's proposed site, is currently in an OFSTED category (Notice to Improve) and performs very poorly in Key Stage 2 Assessment.

George White Junior School, situated 2.2 miles from FSN's proposed site is also poor performing and has significant surplus capacity. Officials have analysed the potential impact of FSN on this school, as well as Larkman Primary School, in more detail below.

Local authority view

Officials invited Norfolk LA to provide the Department with its views on the Free School proposal. Their response in January, highlighted that their 'real concern was over the pattern of admissions and the way it might have an adverse effect on existing schools.'

The LA also stated that they oversaw the random allocation the school undertook for applications for Reception and Year 3, providing independent scrutiny of the process, and initially expressed a concern over these 2 oversubscribed year groups.

An analysis of the applications conducted by the LA showed that for Reception there is a wide spread of primary catchment areas with pupils being drawn from 16 catchment areas. The highest impacts are for **Angel Road Infant School** having 4 pupils drawn from its catchment area and with **Mile Cross Primary School** having 3 drawn from its catchment area. However, the LA stated that these are in an area where Norwich is 'facing some challenges in growing numbers in that pupil cohort so the impact will be marginal'.

In Year 3, the LA stated that places are drawn from catchment areas served by 14 current schools, with only **Nelson Infant** and then **Wensum Junior**, both of which have significant surplus places, 'at risk of losing a significant number of pupils'. The impact of FSN on these two schools, together with **Angel Road Infant School** and **Mile Cross Primary School**, are analysed in more detail below.

Impact on individual schools

Below is a discussion of the likely impact of the proposed school on the schools flagged by the LA as being most at risk from losing pupils, as well as, those highlighted above as poorly performing and operating with significant surplus capacity. So as to be able to

form a balanced view, officials have also analysed the impact of the proposal on the school closest to the FSN site, **Lakenham Primary School**, and the highest performing Primary School in Norwich, **Trowse Primary School**.

Schools highlighted as at risk by Norfolk County Council

Angel Road Infant School is situated approximately 2 miles from the FSN site. It caters for 5-7 year olds and is operating at 18% above capacity with 177 pupils on roll for its 150 pupil capacity. The school was last inspected by Ofsted in 2009 and received grade 2 – good. 25% of its pupils are eligible for Free School Meals and 23% have English as an additional language.

Four of FSN's Reception pupils for 2011 are drawn from its catchment area. However, this is a good and popular school which is operating significantly above capacity and so it is unlikely Angel Road Infant School will lose significant numbers of Reception pupils in the future to FSN especially considering the latter's size and relatively few children it has attracted so far from this catchment area. Furthermore, the LA have flagged that growing numbers of children in the local area of the school for the 5-7 pupil cohort means the impact of the proposal on the school is likely to be negligible given FSN's size.

Mile Cross Primary School is situated approximately 2.7 miles from the FSN site. It caters for 3-11 year olds and currently has 413 pupils on roll with a 420 pupil capacity. It is therefore currently operating with a small 1.7% surplus capacity. Performance data for 2008-10 shows 32%/58% of pupils achieving KS2 in English and Maths with the school boycotting the exams in 2010. It serves one of the most deprived areas (**see map**) of Norwich with 44% of its pupils being eligible for Free School Meals.

The school was last inspected in 2008 and received grade 3 – Satisfactory. The LA flagged that, based on Reception places offered at FSN for 2011, 3 pupils will be drawn from its catchment area.

For a school of this size with a very small surplus FSN will not have a high impact. However, there is a possibility that, if FSN's popularity were to increase, Mile Cross, as a relatively weak school, would lose pupils to the new school. On balance, given FSN's wide catchment and size, Mile Cross's small surplus and the growing numbers in the area for that pupil cohort, we judge that the overall impact will be minimal.

Nelson Infant School is a school for 5-7 year olds situated approximately 1.6 miles from the FSN site. It currently has 150 pupils on roll with a 215 pupil capacity and so is currently operating with 30.2% surplus capacity. The school was last inspected in 2008 and received grade 2 – good. 37% of its pupils are eligible for Free School Meals and 19% have English as an additional language.

In the case of Nelson Infant, based on the pattern of Year 3 applications, the LA has concluded that it is 'at risk of losing a significant number of pupils'. As it is a 5-7 school, Year 3 applications do not have a bearing on their pupil numbers. However, it could be argued that if FSN grows in popularity, in the future, more pupils from Nelson Infant School's catchment area may apply for Reception places at FSN instead. Further, whilst the school is not underperforming it has significant surplus capacity. The extent of the impact is difficult to assess, but given what we know of FSN's size and catchment area, officials consider it unlikely that the impact of FSN will be significant enough to threaten the future viability of Nelson Infant School.

Wensum Junior School is situated approximately 1.8 miles from the Free School Norwich proposed site. It caters for 7-11 year olds and currently has 129 pupils on roll and with a capacity of 240 pupils and so is operating with 46.2% surplus capacity. The school was last inspected in 2009 and received grade 2- good. Performance data for 2008-10 shows 50%/65%/67% of pupils achieving KS2 in English and Maths. 33% of its pupils are eligible for Free School Meals and 11% have English as an additional language.

Wensum Junior similarly was flagged as 'at risk of losing a significant number of pupils' and whilst not a poor performing school has significant surplus capacity. From 2012/13 onwards, FSN will only be admitting a new Reception class each year. If FSN's popularity continues or increases with pupils from Wensum Junior's catchment area, then it is possible that Wensum Junior will lose children who enter FSN at Reception age who would have gone to a local Infant school and then moved to a Junior School like Wensum Junior. However, given what we know of FSN's size and the fact that, so far, it is attracting children not on grounds of proximity to their home, officials consider it unlikely that the impact of FSN will be significant enough to threaten the future viability of Wensum Junior School.

Local Underperforming Schools

Larkman Primary School is situated approximately 2.7 miles from the Free School Norwich proposed site. It caters for 5-11 year olds. It currently has 284 pupils on roll with a capacity of 315 pupils. It is therefore operating with a 10.8% surplus capacity.

The school was recently inspected in 2010 and was placed in a category – Notice to Improve. Performance data for 2008-10 shows 40%/24%/36% of pupils achieving KS2 in English and Maths. 54% of its pupils are eligible for Free School Meals with only 3% of its pupils having English as an additional language.

George White Primary School is situated 2.2 miles from the Free School Norwich proposed site. It caters for 7-11 year olds and currently has 190 pupils on roll with a capacity of 324 pupils. It is therefore operating with a 41.4% surplus capacity.

The school was recently inspected by Ofsted in 2010 and received grade 3 – Satisfactory. Performance data for 2008-10 shows 42%/62% of pupils achieved KS2 in English and maths with the school boycotting the exams in 2010. 23% of its pupils are eligible for Free School Meals with only 7% of its pupils having English as an additional language.

Any impact of FSN on local provision would more likely to be significant for schools which are underperforming and undersubscribed such as **Larkman Primary and George White Primary School**. Schools like these are normally more vulnerable to losing children when additional school places become available elsewhere.

However, given that The Free School Norwich is only planned as a one Form Entry school and, as evidenced by the catchment area for 2011 places, is likely to attract pupils from across the City and its outskirts, we do not expect there to be any significant impact on any one school in Norwich as a result of its introduction. Therefore, we judge the potential impact of FSN on these 2 schools, and similar schools in Norwich, as minimal.

Highest performing local school

Trowse Primary School is situated approximately 1.4 miles from The Free School Norwich proposed site. The school is oversubscribed with 107 pupils on roll and a 105 pupil capacity. It is a very high performing school with 100%/93%/100% of pupils achieving KS2 in English and maths during 2008-10. At its most recent Ofsted inspection it was rated Outstanding.

It serves one of the least deprived areas in Norwich with 5% of its pupils eligible for Free School Meals and none of its pupils having English as an additional language.

It is very unlikely, given what we know of its size and catchment area that FSN will have an adverse impact on a high performing, popular school which serves an affluent area like Trowse Primary School.

Nearest school to The Free School Norwich

Lakenham Primary School is situated approximately 0.8 miles from The Free School Norwich proposed site. The school has 312 pupils on roll with a maximum capacity of 420 pupils. It is therefore operating with a 25.7% surplus capacity.

Performance data for 2008-10 shows that 44%/55% of pupils achieved KS2 in English and maths with the school boycotting the exams in 2010. It is therefore an underperforming school. Furthermore, 41% of its pupils are eligible for Free School Meals and 12% of its pupils have English as an additional language and so it is operating in a relatively challenging context.

However, an analysis by officials of the postcodes of pupils who have accepted places at the school shows that the majority of pupils are travelling from a 1-4 mile distance. Furthermore, the analysis also showed that pupils were willing to travel in from as far as 20, 12 and 9 miles away. This is due to the appeal of the school to working parents.

Based on FSN's catchment area for 2011 and its appeal to commuting parents, it is apparent that applications are not likely to be driven by proximity to the school. Therefore, the impact of FSN on the closest schools, irrespective of whether they are a popular school or a poor performing and undersubscribed school operating in a challenging context, like Lakenham Primary School, is still likely to be minimal.

Nearby maintained secondary schools and post-16 institutions

The Free School Norwich will be a school admitting children of primary age. It will begin with Reception through to Year 3 classes and will build up over four years admitting a new Reception class each year. As such, The Free School Norwich is unlikely to have any direct impact on local secondary schools, and even less likely to impact post-16 and FE institutions.

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. However, as we have concluded that The Free School Norwich will not significantly impact on any individual schools, the effect on primary feeder arrangements is likely to be negligible.

One of the nearest maintained secondary schools is The Hewett School which is situated less than a mile from The Free School Norwich preferred site. It has a capacity of 1493 places and has a number of local primary feeder schools including Lakenham Primary. Officials understand that The Hewett School were initially concerned about the impact of The Free School Norwich on their

feeder primaries. However, FSN have stated that a meeting between the proposers and the Headteacher of The Hewett School to discuss catchment area has reassured them that FSN will not have a significant impact on any individual schools in their feeder cluster.

Conclusion

We have concluded that FSN is most likely to have an adverse impact on those relatively poorly performing schools operating with significant surplus capacity. However, given FSN's size, what we know of its catchment area for 2011 and that there is a projected increase in demand for primary school places in future years, the impact FSN will have on any of these types of schools or schools closest to the proposed site will be minimal.

We have also analysed the schools which Norfolk County Council have flagged as most at risk of losing pupils to FSN. This risk is most pronounced with Nelson Infant School and Wensum Junior Schools who both have high surplus capacity and whose catchment areas have proved popular in the first year of applications for FSN. However, given the characteristics of FSN's catchment area and size, officials do not believe that the impact of FSN will be significant enough to threaten the future viability of the schools.

Furthermore, as the number of required pupil places is predicted to grow over the next 10 years, the effect of injecting new primary places into the system will be beneficial in the long-term. Also the loss of pupils to any schools needs to be balanced with the positive impact that FSN will have in improving parental choice by widening the number and type of places available in local primary state provision, and by driving up standards in surrounding schools. Both of these features are key aims of the Free Schools policy and we would expect FSN to drive up standards in schools across the board, improving standards for all young people in the area.

In addition, because of its extended schools service provision, FSN could also increase the economic well-being of children in Norfolk, particularly those from less advantaged backgrounds, by enabling their parents to work. Therefore, we conclude that any minimal impact FSN may have on local primary schools, is outbalanced by the benefits that will be provided by the additional school.

Table 1. All maintained Primary Schools within 4 miles of The Free School Norwich

School Name	Age Range		Roll	Capacity	% Full	% EAL 2010	% FSM Eligibility 2010	OFSTED REPORT	Postcode	Distance from FSN
Angel Road Infant School	5	7	177	150	118.0%	23%	25%	Good, 2009	NR3 3HR	2 Miles
Angel Road Junior School	7	11	257	324	79.3%	10%	25%	Good, 2007	NR3 3HS	1.9 Miles
Avenue Junior School	7	11	396	417	95.0%	4%	5%	Good, 2008	NR2 3HP	1.3 Miles
Bignold Primary School	3	11	400	420	95.2%	13%	31%	Good, 2008	NR2 2SP	0.8 Miles
Bluebell Primary School	3	11	231	210	110.0%	19%	29%	Satisfactory, 2008	NR4 7DS	2.5 Miles
Cavell Primary and Nursery School	3	11	273	210	130.0%	5%	31%	Good, 2008	NR1 2LR	1.5 Miles
Catton Grove Primary School	3	11	494	510	96.9%	10%	36%	Good, 2008	NR3 3TP	3 Miles
Cecil Gowing Infant School	5	7	144	180	80.0%	4%	13%	Good, 2008	NR7 8NZ	3.4 Miles
Colman Infant School	5	7	175	180	97.2%	13%	24%	Good, 2009	NR4 7AW	1.6 Miles
Colman Junior School	7	11	202	270	74.8%	13%	28%	Good 2009	NR4 7AW	1.6 Miles
Cringleford CofE VA Primary School	5	11	211	207	101.9%	4%	3%	Good, 2007	NR4 6UG	3.7 Miles
Dussindale Primary School	4	11	168	315	53.3%	8%	10%	Good, 2009	NR7 0US	3.9 Miles
Eaton Primary School	5	11	350	418	83.7%	8%	5%	Satisfactory, 2008	NR4 6HU	3.1 Miles

Falcon Junior School	7	11	326	344	94.8%	2%	8%	Satisfactory, 2010	NR7 8NT	3.4 Miles
Garrick Green Infant School	5	7	148	157	94.3%	0%	10%	Good, 2007	NR6 7AL	3.5 Miles
George White Junior School	7	11	190	324	58.6%	7%	23%	Satisfactory 2010	NR3 4RG	2.2 Miles
Heartsease Primary School	3	11	376	420	89.5%	4%	20%	Good, 2010	NR7 9UE	2.4 Miles
Heather Avenue Infant School	5	7	104	120	86.7%	4%	22%	Good, 2007	NR6 6LT	3.3Miles
Hillside Avenue Primary School, Thorpe	3	11	531	466	113.9%	2%	7%	Good, 2009	NR7 0QW	3.2 Miles
Lakenham Primary School	3	11	312	420	74.3%	12%	41%	Satisfactory, 2009	NR1 2HL	0.8 Miles
Larkman Primary School	5	11	284	315	90.2%	3%	54%	Notice to Improve , 2010	NR5 8ED	2.7 Miles
Lionwood Infant and Nursery School	3	7	197	239	82.4%	14%	30%	Satisfactory, 2008	NR1 4AN	2 Miles
Lionwood Junior School	7	11	172	360	47.8%	12%	41%	Satisfactory, 2009	NR1 4HT	1.6 Miles
Magdalen Gates Primary School	5	11	169	237	71.3%	17%	37%	Good, 2008	NR3 1NG	1.9 Miles
Mile Cross Primary School	3	11	413	420	98.3%	5%	44%	Satisfactory, 2008	NR3 2QU	2.7 Miles
Mousehold Infant & Nursery School	3	7	269	238	113.0%	14%	19%	Outstanding, 2008	NR3 4RS	2.3 Miles
Nelson Infant School	5	7	150	215	69.8%	19%	37%	Good, 2008	NR2 4DR	1.6 Miles
Old Catton CofE VC Junior School	7	11	135	180	75.0%	0%	14%	Satisfactory, 2009	NR6 7DS	3.5 Miles
Recreation Road Infant School	5	7	314	315	99.7%	8%	5%	Outstanding, 2009	NR2 3PA	1.6 Miles

Sparhawk Infant School & Nursery	3	7	113	90	125.6%	0%	3%	Good, 2008	NR7 8BU	4 Miles
Sprowston Infant School	5	7	139	176	79.0%	4%	14%	Good, 2010	NR7 8EW	3.5 Miles
Sprowston Junior School	7	11	238	240	99.2%	5%	13%	Satisfactory, 2009	NR7 8EW	3.5 Miles
St John's Catholic Infant School	5	7	179	180	99.4%	32%	8%	Outstanding, 2008	NR2 3AT	1.2 Miles
St Thomas More Roman Catholic Junior School	7	11	340	360	94.4%	22%	10%	Good, 2008	NR2 3QB	2 Miles
St William's Primary School	5	11	488	420	116.2%	0%	5%	Satisfactory 2011	NR7 0AJ	2.5 Miles
Trowse Primary School	4	11	107	105	101.9%	0%	5%	Outstanding, 2007	NR14 8TH	
Tuckswold Community Primary School	3	11	182	206	88.3%	7%	43%	Satisfactory, 2009	NR4 6BP	1.6 Miles
Valley Primary School	5	11	173	315	54.9%	5%	43%	Satisfactory, 2008	NR5 8XZ	3.1 Miles
Wensum Junior School	7	11	129	240	53.8%	11%	33%	Good, 2009	NR2 4HB	1.8 Miles
West Earlham Infant School	3	7	223	179	124.6%	5%	34%	Outstanding, 2008	NR5 8HT	2.7 Miles
West Earlham Junior School	7	11	192	257	74.7%	7%	48%	Satisfactory, 2008	NR5 8HT	2.7 Miles
White Woman Lane Junior School	7	11	275	300	91.7%	4%	17%	Satisfactory, 2007	NR6 7JA	4 Miles

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