

**Title: Sandymoor 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 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 in the area in which the additional school is (or is proposed to be) situated.
2. Sandymoor Free School (SFS) is planned to be a secondary school catering for 880 11 to 18 year old pupils. The school is expected to open in September 2012, initially at a temporary site for the first 2 years before moving to a new build. The aim is to provide 80 places for the Y7 cohort and provide a further 90 places in the second year of opening (Sep 2013). The school aims to add sixth form provision in 2014 with a view to having 880 places in all years when at full capacity. The school will specialise in Science and Technology and will be a mixed, non-faith school, with a comprehensive admissions policy.

**Admissions, Catchment Area & Characteristics**Admissions

3. The admissions policy will comply with the School Admissions Code and the SEN Code of practice, taking into account Part 4 of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA, as amended by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001).
4. At steady state the annual admissions number for year 7 students will be 120. Admissions into other years will be dealt with on an ad-hoc basis taking into account the available spaces and any waiting list that is in place, in conjunction with the over-subscription criteria.
5. The school will have a non-selective intake in line with The Law: Equity and Fair Access in School Admission Arrangements and actively encourages applications from all backgrounds, cultures, abilities and faiths.
6. The school admissions will be separate for the secondary school and sixth form. The sixth form is a specialist Science, Technology, Innovation and Sports College and as such will not be suitable for all entrants (either in ability or in the subject offering).
7. The sixth form entry will be 150 students in each year when at steady state. Admissions to courses within the sixth form will be on a course by course basis whereby the student will need to have demonstrated, through the KS4 results, that they have the aptitude to study the chosen course. Students already within the school will not need to apply for a place in the sixth form.

8. The school will not admit students that have been excluded from two previous schools.
9. Secondary School Oversubscription Criteria will be applied as follows:-
  - a. Children with a final Statement of Educational Needs where the school is named in the statement.
  - b. Children in public care – children who are subject to a care order.
  - c. Siblings – students with elder brothers or sisters including half brothers and sisters and adopted brothers and sisters and unrelated children living together as part of the same household attending the school and expected to continue in the following year.
  - d. Students living nearest to the school measured using an Ordnance Survey address – point system which measures the address point of the place of permanent residence of the student to the address point of the school (in the interim the address point used will be Sandymoor Hall, Otterburn Street, Sandymoor, Runcorn, WA7 1XU being a permanent prominent central community location).
  - e. A tie-break will operate should there be two or more students who have applied to the school whose address points are identical: the remaining places will be randomly allocated.
10. The sixth form school over subscription criteria includes b,d and e above and apply to children transferring from secondary school to the SFS sixth form (having met the minimum criteria for the chosen course of study).
11. A waiting list of unsuccessful applicants will be drawn up and maintained for a minimum of one term with priority given in accordance with the oversubscription criteria. Any places which become available will be filled from the waiting list. This will also be used for ad-hoc entry into the school.
12. In line with Schedule 27 paragraph 3 of the Education Act 1996: “Parents may express a preference for the maintained school they wish their child to attend”, SFS’s admissions policy will accommodate all students who express a wish to attend and a final Statement of Educational Needs which names SFS even if the latter exceeds student admission numbers.

#### Catchment Area & Characteristics

13. 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 Free School’s anticipated location. Although SFS is located in Runcorn and within the Halton LA, it is also close to the Warrington LA boundary; therefore some of the schools that are within the catchment area are located in Warrington. The distance travelled by at least 80% of pupils in Halton is 1.5 miles and the average travelling distance is approximately 1.1 miles.
14. The secondary schools and the FE college identified within the

catchment area are as follows:

- Ormiston Bolingbroke Academy (Runcorn)
- Bridgewater High School (Warrington)
- Penketh High School (Warrington)
- Grange Comprehensive School (Runcorn)
- St Gregory's Catholic High School (Warrington)
- St Chad's Catholic and Church of England High School (Runcorn)
- Heath Academy (Runcorn)
- Riverside FE College (Widnes)

15. The secondary pupil population in both Halton and Warrington is predicted to decrease by 2015. The data<sup>1</sup> estimates that the proportion of surplus places in Halton will increase from 17.8% to 18.5% by 2015 and in Warrington from 21.1% to 22.6%. However, there is potential for longer term population growth in the Sandymoor parish as plans have been approved by Halton LA for a housing development project for 240 dwellings. This has the potential to bring in more families into the area and increase demand for a local school.

### Secondary pupil population

School Population Prediction		Academic year 2010 /11		Academic year 2015/16		2010/11 – 2015/16
LA	Number of places in 2011	No of pupils	Surplus %	No. of pupils	Surplus %	% increase in population
<b>Secondary school pupil population</b>						
Halton UA	8,611	7,078	17.8%	7,016	18.5%	-0.70%
Warrington UA	15,261	12,046	21.1%	11,816	22.6%	-1.50%

### Local Authority population

16. In the short term (2008-2013) Halton's population is projected to grow by 1% from 118,500 to 119,800, by 2% from 118,500 to 121,400 in the medium term (2008 - 2018) and by 4% in the long term (2008 - 2023). The population of younger people (0 - 14 year olds) is projected to grow by 7% (2008 - 2023).<sup>2</sup>

17. The Synergy CYP database<sup>3</sup> indicated that in 2011 there were 283 pupils from the Sandymoor district that attended schools in Halton (240 primary, 40 secondary and 3 special schools) and 100 pupils that attended schools in Warrington.

18. At primary level, the majority of Sandymoor pupils (152) attended Moore Primary compared with 46 who attended Daresbury Primary. Both these schools are within 0.7 miles of the SFS proposed site and may feed into

<sup>1</sup> LA District forecast - Secondary (Year 7 - 11)

<sup>2</sup> Office for National Statistics (ONS) population projections 2010

<sup>3</sup> Synergy CYP database (identifying those children R- Y11 currently recorded as attending a Halton or Warrington School with an address in one of those areas as at 13/02/2012)

the new school when opened.

19. At secondary level, the majority of pupils from Sandymoor attended Bridgewater High (64) in Warrington, with 21 attending St Chad's RC & CoE and 10 attending Heath Academy in Halton.

### **Local Authority View (Halton & Warrington)**

20. Gerald Meehan, Director for Children Services at Halton Borough Council, provided a response on behalf of the authority, confirming that they do not support the opening of this free school due to the impact on the curriculum and sustainability of education provision already in Runcorn. His note indicates that there will already be 16 % surplus places across the authority from September 2012 for Y7 pupils and with the opening of SFS; this would increase the surplus to 23.5 %. The projected proportion of surplus places, according to the Council, will be 17.7% in 2013 and 22% in 2014. The LA's assumption however does not take account that the majority of parents in Sandymoor are currently sending their children to secondary schools in Warrington, as explained above.

21. In terms of post 16 provision, the Council has indicated that there is already adequate provision provided by St Chad's, Ormiston Academy and Riverside FE College to provide sufficient post 16 choice to parents and pupils, with a wide range of good quality academic and vocational courses offered to meet demand. The Council also confirmed that approximately £30m was being invested at Grange Secondary School and Ormiston Academy to develop and improve existing facilities.

22. The Department's Project Lead for SFS has discussed these issues and the proposal for the Free School with the DCS at Halton LA but the LA position is unchanged.

23. DfE wrote to Kath O'Dwyer, Strategic Director of Children's Services at Warrington Borough Council on 13/02/12 to ask for the local authority's views on the impact of the Free School as some of the schools close to SFS are in Warrington. Warrington LA replied to the DfE stating that in their opinion, surplus places and falling rolls in the boroughs made a new school unnecessary.

### **Representations**

24. Direct representations have been received by the Department. The Principal and Chair of the Ormiston Bolingbroke Academy wrote in separately to air concerns about surplus school places in the borough. Derek Twigg MP also contacted the DfE to express concerns about the potential flooding of the market in the area if several new schools were to go ahead. Head teachers from St Chad's, Ormiston Bolingbroke Academy, The Grange and Riverside College wrote collectively to the DfE to raise issues about potential flooding of the market in the borough and to describe the improved educational outcomes in Halton.

25. A public consultation has been carried out by the SFS Trust. The S10

consultation ran from January 16 to March 18 2012 and the report was made available to DfE in May 2012. More than 120 residents had responded to the consultation survey and this reflected largely positive views on the opening of SFS. There was some opposition to the proposal from two education institutions and a small number of residents, but the vast majority of respondents were supportive with 92.4% of respondents in favour of the Free School. The small number of issues raised centred around traffic concerns and the lack of need for a new school in the area.

26. There has been quite extensive coverage of the Free School proposal in the local media, particularly the local newspaper (Runcorn & Widnes Weekly News). This has broadly reported progress on the school pre-opening process and views from opposition to the Free School project, particularly from the Halton Trade Union Council but the paper has also reported views from the SFS Trust and PD in response to criticism about the school.

### Impact on other schools

27. We have considered the impact of opening the Free School on all secondary schools within a 4 miles radius of the proposed Free School's site and below is an analysis of the likely impact on the nearest schools. The table below shows that out of 7 secondary schools identified within the catchment area, one will feel a high impact, two will feel a moderate impact and four a minimal impact.

School name	Distance from Free School	Impact rating	Capacity	Pupils on roll	% of Y6 pupils attaining 5 A to C GCSEs inc English and Maths
Ormiston Bolingbroke Academy	2.24	High	1100	625	48%
Bridgewater High School	2.92	Moderate	1728	1663	80%
Grange Comp School	3.21	Moderate	1470	1310	44%
Penketh High School	2.99	Minimum	1335	1378	56%
St Chads RC and CoE High	3.5	Minimum	1107	1021	46%
St Gregory's Catholic High	3.25	Minimum	960	972	77%
Heath Academy School	3.8	Minimum	1200	1083	57%

### Schools where the impact is High

28. The impact on one school (Ormiston Bolingbroke Academy) out of the seven local schools has been assessed as high.

#### Ormiston Bolingbroke Academy

- Ormiston is a new sponsored Academy which opened in September 2010. The predecessor school was the LA maintained Halton High School which was considered to be performing poorly with low aspirations and low attainment. The new Academy is a co-educational, non-faith school specialising in English and Applied Learning. It has not yet had a full Ofsted inspection but had a first monitoring inspection,

published in February 2012. This report was very positive and encouraging on progress made and the direction of travel compared to the predecessor school. The Academy will receive circa £6.5m of '71 Academies' programme funding.

- The impact of opening SFS on the Academy is considered high for three main reasons:
  - It is the closest secondary school to SFS's proposed site, although it is still 2.24 miles away, which is well above the average travelling distance for secondary age pupils in Halton LA. It is therefore more likely than other schools further away to lose pupils to the Free School.
  - In academic year 2011/12 the school had 625 pupils, leaving 475 places (43%) surplus from a capacity of 1,100. This is a very large surplus and the number of pupils in the school is relatively low for a secondary school, so any further loss of pupils could impact on the school's long term viability.
  - 2011 GCSE results for 5 A\* to C passes, including Maths & English were well below the national average of 59% at 48%. Although this is a significant improvement on the previous school and the trajectory of improvement reflects an upward trend, parents at the school may be attracted by the alternative offer provided by the Free School.

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

29. Two out of the seven schools within the catchment area are expected to feel a moderate impact when the SFS opens. These are Grange Comprehensive School and Bridgewater High school.

#### Grange Comprehensive School

- Grange is an LA maintained co-educational and non-faith comprehensive school in Runcorn, 3.21 miles from SFS. Grange has 11% surplus places, (the second highest of all local schools) with 1,310 places filled from a capacity of 1,470.
- The school was rated as satisfactory by Ofsted but GCSE results for 5 A\* to C passes, (incl Maths & English) are well below the national average of 59% at 44% and the lowest of all the schools in the local area.
- Given that this is the lowest performing school in the local area the impact of opening SFS is likely to be moderate, although the school is 3 miles from SFS and parent/pupils may consider the closer, better performing schools' of Bridgewater and Penketh as first choice options rather than SFS.

#### Bridgewater High School (Warrington)

- Bridgewater is a LA maintained, co-educational, non-faith comprehensive

school located 2.92 miles from SFS. Bridgewater is rated by Ofsted as outstanding and in 2011 80% of its pupils secured 5+ GCSE passes at A\* to C (including English & Maths), well above the national average and in the top quartile in the country.

- The school has 1,728 places, and is slightly undersubscribed (4%) with 1,663 places filled, but has the highest number of first choice admissions which were 21% more than places available.
- Around 64 pupils living in Sandymoor district attended Bridgewater School in 2011<sup>3</sup> which is why the Free School's impact on this school is considered to be moderate. However, given the high performance of the school and its outstanding rating by Ofsted, it is anticipated that Bridgewater would still remain a popular school. As a result, even if some pupils from the Sandymoor area opted for the Free School instead, Bridgewater is likely to fill all of its places from elsewhere.

### **Schools where the impact is Minimal**

30. Four out of the seven schools within the catchment area: St Gregory's (RC), Heath Academy, Penketh High and St Chad's Catholic and CofE High are anticipated to feel a minimal impact when the Free School opens.

- St Gregory's was rated as good by Ofsted, is oversubscribed by 1% (12 pupils) and is a faith school so parents wanting to send their children to it may not be interested in a non-faith Free School. Overall, therefore, the Free School is likely to have a minimal impact on it.
- Heath Academy is rated as outstanding by Ofsted and although the school is showing a surplus of 10% (172 places), pupil numbers are expected to grow now that the school is showing good signs of improvement since becoming an Academy. Heath is also the furthest school away from SFS (at 3.8 miles, nearly four times the average travelling distance in the LA), so the impact on this school is considered to be minimal.
- Penketh High School is an LA maintained, co-educational non-faith comprehensive school in Warrington, 2.99 miles from SFS. Although it has only a satisfactory Ofsted rating and below average GCSE attainment and parents may therefore be attracted by an alternative, it is oversubscribed and therefore even if it lost some pupils to the Free School it should be able to fill all or most of its places.
- St Chad's Catholic and Church of England High School (Halton) is an average size secondary school which opened as a joint church school in 2009, having previously been a Catholic secondary school. Although GCSE results are low (46% 5+ A\* to C including Maths and English), meaning that parents may potentially be attracted by an alternative, the school is oversubscribed and therefore even if it lost some pupils to the Free School it should be able to fill all or most

of its places, especially as it is an improving school rated good by Ofsted. In addition, St Chad's is a faith school so parents wanting to send their children to it may not be interested in a non-faith Free School.

### **Impact of Local Primary Schools**

31. There are 7 primary schools within a 2 miles radius of SFS (see below):

School	Age	Miles
Daresbury Primary School, Community School	5-11	0.5
Moore Primary School, Community School,	5-11	0.7
Windmill Hill Primary School, Community School	4-11	1.4
St Berteline's C of E Primary School, Voluntary Aided School	4-11	1.6
St Martin's Catholic Primary School, Voluntary Aided School	4-11	1.6
Gorse Wood Primary School, Community School	4-11	1.7
The Park Primary School, Community School	3-11	2.0

32. As a secondary school, SFS will have minimal impact on local primaries, except for providing additional choice for parents of pupils at those schools. In the Sandymoor area the route from primary to secondary education has historically been a partner link between the primary schools in Moore and Daresbury and Bridgewater High secondary school.

### Impact on Special Schools, Alternative provision and FE institutions

33. The Free School 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 Special and Alternative Provision schools.

### Riverside FE College

34. Riverside College is a medium-sized general further education college located in Widnes and serves the towns of Widnes and Runcorn but also draws pupils from Warrington, St Helens and Liverpool. Riverside operates on four main sites: Kingsway, Cronton (the sixth form centre), Runcorn and a specialist construction centre at Astmoor.

35. Riverside was initially judged to be inadequate at its previous Ofsted inspection in November 2008, however was shown to have improved dramatically following their latest Ofsted inspection in 2010 which rated the college as good overall and outstanding for its capacity to improve.

36. Given the wide catchment area of the college, its good Ofsted rating, the broad coverage of courses the college delivers across a wide range of vocational sectors, the overall impact on the college when the SFS opens is likely to be minimal.



## **Conclusion**

37. The overall impact on all but one secondary schools in the local area is likely to be minimal or moderate. The only school expected to experience a high impact is Ormiston Bolingbroke Academy, owing to its low number of existing pupils, high proportion of surplus places and low relative standards.

Any negative impact is likely to be outweighed by the positive impact SFS will have in increasing parental choice, addressing the demand for high quality secondary school places in the Sandymoor area and increasing competition to drive up standards.